Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

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Editorial Comments

W. H. EVANS

PLANNING THE INDUSTRIAL TOWN

JACK WODDIS

IRELAND—COMMON CAUSE OF BRITISH AND IRISH PEOPLE

Discussion:

RICHARD GUNN
Marxism and Dialectical Method

GORDON GRAY
The Althusser Debate

DONALD CAMERON
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On the Importance of People

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MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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CONTENTS

	Editorial Comments	193
W. H. Evans	Planning the Industrial Town	200
Jack Woddis	Ireland—Common Cause of British and Irish People	205
Discussion:		
Richard Gunn	Marxism and Dialectical Method	215
Gordon Gray	The Althusser Debate	220
Donald Cameron	Marxism and the Family	221
Morris Colman	On The Importance of People	224

SOME ARTICLES PLANNED FOR FUTURE ISSUES

Tony Chater	The Strategy of Peaceful Co-existence Today
Jack Cohen	The Nature of the Working Class
Hans Hess	Is there a Marxist Theory of Art?
Martin Jacques	Youth Culture
Mick Jenkins	Some Unemployed Struggles in the Thirties
Bob Rowthorne	Unemployment and the Labour Governments, 1964-1970
Raymond Southall	The Lord of the Flies
Barrie Stacey	The Marxist View of Human Nature
Peter Wyncoll	The Early Socialists in Nottingham

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Editorial Comments

THE Scientific/Technological Revolution has now been developing for twenty years. As a result science has become a direct productive force more than ever before. Two major problems arise from this for Communists. First, since most scientists, technologists and similar "white-collar" workers can now only live by selling their specially skilled labour power for salaries, and now participate in the production of surplus value, how do we now define the working class? Linked with this, what have been the effects of the scientific/technological revolution on class structure and on so-called "class mobility"?

The second concerns the political implications: what effect does it have on the building of the broad anti-monopoly alliance, on the strategy and tactics of the struggle for Socialism?

These and related questions continue to be the subject of articles, books, research and discussions in many Communist Parties. To mention a few, from the Soviet Union has come a most detailed study on "Capitalism and Classes" by W. S. Semyonov recently translated into German.[1] In addition, we have received two articles by Soviet economists and sociologists. One "Some Aspects of the Study of the Modern Proletariat" is by T. Timofeyev and A. Chernyaev and the other is by G. Diligensky, on "The Scientific/Technological Revolution and the Social Development of the Working Class". We hope to publish at least long extracts from these.

The West German Institute for Marxist Studies and Research is publishing a characteristically fundamental and comprehensive study in three volumes entitled "Classes and Social-Structure in Federal Germany, 1950-1970[2], the first volume of which we have already received. They have also published a small book dealing with the Marxist concept of class[3] by one of their leading theoreticians, Robert Steigerwald.

The French Communist Party has been studying these problems for many years. Its economic journal "Economie et Politique" has devoted particular attention to discussing them for some time, while Chapter 3 of Volume One of the recently published French Communist Party study of State Monopoly Capitalism[4] discusses them at some length.

Both the Italian and Spanish parties have likewise devoted much time and research to these matters, the Spanish Party being particularly concerned with the political implications.[5]

While there is considerable interest in these matters in our Party, not much has as yet been published. Alan Hunt[6] fired the opening shot three years ago in what was hoped would develop into an extended discussion. But, regrettably, this did not happen. A few months later Gerry Cohen opened a discussion on "Class Structure in Britain" at the January 1971 meeting of the Executive Committee.[7]

In addition there was an interesting article on these questions, raising some important problems of strategy for Britain, in our March issue by Sam Aaronovitch.[8]

We hope that an article by Jack Cohen on the "Nature of the Working Class" to be published in a forthcoming issue, will mark the beginning of a real discussion on these vitally important questions in *Marxism Today*.

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[1] *Kapitalismus und Klassen*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin, GDR.

[2] *Klassen-und Sozialstruktur der BRD 1950-1970*, Institut fur Marxistische-Studien und Forschungen (IMSF), Frankfurt/Main.

[3] *Marxistische Klassenanalyse oder Spatburgerliche Mythen.*

[4] *Le Capitalisme Monopoliste D'Etat, Editions Sociales, Paris.*

[5] See Santiago Carrillo, *Problems of Socialism Today*, Lawrence & Wishart, and M. Azcarate, *The New Role of Science, Marxism Today*, March 1973.

[6] Alan Hunt "Class Structure in Britain Today", *Marxism Today*, June 1970.

[7] See *Comment*, January 30, 1971, for extracts.

[8] *Perspectives of Class Struggle and Class Alliances.*

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THE WORKING CLASS—A REVOLUTIONARY CLASS

For some time now various writers—Marcuse, Fanon and others—have been attacking the Marxist theory of the leading role of the proletariat, of the industrial working-class in the socialist revolution, of the working-class as the most revolutionary class in capitalist society. Looking at the Labour movement and the working-class in the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the USA, noting the delay in the advance to socialism in these countries and the fact that capitalism to date was overthrown firstly in economically backward countries, such writers have written off the working-class as a decisive factor in the socialist revolution.

The late C. Wright Mills was an early exponent of this theory, seeing the intellectuals as the decisive force. He has been followed by Herbert Marcuse who emphatically rejected the working-class as being now the "historic subject" of revolution in any way, for he claimed that it has been completely integrated in capitalist society. Instead he looked to the sub-stratum of outcasts and outsiders, "the exploited and persecuted of other races and colours, the unemployed and unemployable . . ." as the really revolutionary force.

Thus we have here a repetition of the conception of the Lumpenproletariat as the key revolutionary element, first advanced by Bakunin long ago, a conception which became the "*leitmotif*" of the outlook and writings of Franz Fanon.

Two writers in the most recent issue of Socialist Register[9] reiterate and amplify these ideas. V. G. Kiernan in his article on Gramsci writes . . . "in Britain the working-class *could* have put an end to capitalism long ago", but he goes on to say that far from socialism being the aim of the working-class:

> "In Britain nowadays or America . . . class struggle would seem to have resolved itself into a realistic . . . competition over shares in the national cake".
>
> ". . . its (the labouring classes') instincts are defensive. . . . It would never be likely to imagine a dictatorship of the proletariat by itself and Marxism in planning this road may have been confusing its own 'subjective' requirements with the objective power of the working class to build it".

Peter Worsley in his article—"Fanon and the Lumpenproletariat" declares that Fanon was "one of the first" to appreciate the "revolutionary potential" of this "underclass" as he prefers to call the Lumpenproletariat. "He" (Fanon) regarded the theory of the leading revolutionary role of the proletariat . . . as a political idea imported from urbanised and industrialised Europe".

But he goes on to say—"whether they (the underclass) become a revolutionary force does not simply depend on their . . . situation but . . . on the leadership they are given (if any). But this is true of proletarians and peasants too . . . there is no single absolute general proposition that one can make about any particular *type* of class universally as being *the* or even *a* revolutionary force".

Who then is to give the "underclass" leadership? From which class or grouping is it to get its revolutionary ideas? Or are we to gather that such ideas arise spontaneously, automatically, from the fact of their extreme poverty and oppression?

Experience in all Third World countries—and in advanced industrial ones too—contradicts such a notion.[10]

That class is historically and objectively revolutionary whose interests are linked with the further development of the productive forces and this can only be undertaken fully and consistently by making them social property. And the only exploited class whose interest corresponds to such a development and which is organised enough and strong enough to head the struggle to bring this about is the industrial working-class.

That it has not yet done so in the advanced capitalist countries, that the struggle waged is still within the framework of capitalism *does not mean that it will always be so, or that* the Lumpenproletariat has superseded the working class as the force leading the fight for socialism.

It means that there are complications and difficulties, one of the most important being the development of socialist consciousness amongst the working-class.

This is a key problem for the socialist movement and needs the most widespread discussion.

[9] *Socialist Register 1972*, edited by Ralph Milliband and John Saville, Merlin Press, London. Hardback £2.50, paperback £1.00.

[10] This question is fully discussed in Jack Woddis' *New Theories of Revolution*, Lawrence & Wishart, £4.50.

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MARX'S "GRUNDRISSE"

Penguin's announcement of a "Pelican Marx Library", to contain a selection of his major works, is something of a portent—and a very welcome and hopeful one. Marx is evidently "in"! Past are the days when he could be hopefully kept down by ignoring him. And his publication by Penguin will add many new thousands to the tens of thousands of his English readers.

The first volume of this Pelican Marx has now appeared, and consists of over 800 pages of the *Grundrisse*, with an Introduction of some 60 pages by the translator, Martin Nicolaus. *Grundrisse* (in English, "Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy") consists of Marx's voluminous notebooks of 1857-59, containing his studies preliminary to the writing of *Capital*. The published *Critique of Political Economy* belongs to this same period. *Grundrisse* essentially consists of two large sections, one on Money, the other on Capital. But in some respects its total scope is wider than that of *Capital*. And this makes its reading, despite the difficulties involved in it, so very rewarding.

As Martin Nicolaus says in his Introduction, "the fact that much content in the *Grundrisse* is not carried over into *Capital*—particularly the directly, outspokenly 'revolutionary' passages—is due precisely to the requirements of the method of presentation employed in *Capital*. Very little is stated in the latter work, especially in its first volume, which is not embedded in several layers of historical illustration and documention." One result is that much of direct, if sometimes somewhat elusive, relevance to contemporary problems comes out in *Grundrisse*. For example, some of the theoretical argumentation in the chapter on Money seems extremely suggestive in application to the present condition of state monopoly capitalism.

This first publication in English of *Grundrisse* in its entirety will be gratefully received by English-speaking students of, and followers of, Marx. Hitherto only parts have been available in English—the Lawrence & Wishart publications of the unfinished Introduction (included in the edition of *Critique of Political Economy*), and of the sections on *Precapitalist Economic Formations* (with a long introduction by E. J. Hobsbawm), and certain key excerpts which were ably selected and translated by David McLellan (in a slim volume published by Macmillan and rather misleadingly entitled "Marx's *Grundrisse*").

The translator's Introduction to the Pelican *Grundrisse* is scholarly, workmanlike and useful. It should prove of much help to readers before they take the plunge into the massive and often very difficult texts that follow. This is not to say that all Marxists will necessarily endorse every sentence in it. Indeed, if such an Introduction were ever to be produced it could be a bad thing for Marxism, since it would close all future discussion.

MORE RECENT WORK ON THE "GRUNDRISSE"

The difficulty of these texts is increased by the fact that they are taken from Marx's notebooks and were never prepared by him for publication. He often never finished off his sentences, left the verbs out, and so on—which does not make for easy reading. The reader has to fight his way through to make sense of some of it. In this respect, Mr. Nicolaus's translation may be faulted for being too literal and erring on the side of extreme fidelity. He himself states: "The translation aims at a tight fit to the original including the roughness of grammar etc. To attempt to 'polish' this text would have been to tamper with an essential part of its significance." One does feel, however, that more might have been done, with gain rather than loss of essential significance, to ease the task of the reader.

The texts here translated are taken from the current editions in German. One of the difficulties of the original editors of *Grundrisse*, in preparing these editions, was that of deciphering Marx's notoriously illegible handwriting in which, of course, the original Notebooks were written. Another, to which Mr. Nicolaus refers, was that of deciding on the proper order and arrangement of the materials. In recent years, a good deal more work has been done on the texts by German and Soviet scholars grappling with these problems, as a result of which a more authentic text, not yet published, has emerged than the one here translated. Its translation into English must await the corresponding volumes in Lawrence & Wishart's forthcoming 50-volume edition of the Complete Works of Marx and Engels. Meanwhile, this Pelican volume gives us plenty to read with profit, and plenty to think about. An Index would have been useful, but is not provided.

One final point may be made. In announcing the "Pelican Marx", Penguin Books are perhaps under-rating, as is fashionable in

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some circles nowadays, the contribution made to Marxism by Frederick Engels.

FASCIST VIOLENCE IN CATANIA

Southern Italy has seen a spectacular growth in fascist violence over the past five years, as a booklet recently published by the Catania Provincial Federation of the Italian Communist Party amply documents.[11] In his preface, prominent Italian Senator, Paolo Bufalini, writes: "This booklet is a collection of documents, without any commentary: the facts speak for themselves." The stark facts of ultra-right violence directed against individual members of the left, of "black gangs" attacking mass demonstrations, and of judicial paralysis in dealing with the few people arrested.

The background to this sobering report is the constant threat of a right-wing coup in Italy. In 1964, just after the newly-instituted centre-left coalition came to power, plans were hatched for a military coup by the then Army Chief-of-Staff De Lorenzo and President Segni. Since the coup in Greece there have been endless manoeuvrings between the Colonels and neo-fascist leaders in Italy. At the most recent Italian general election, in May 1972, important successes were achieved by the combined forces of the Ultra-Right, who increased their percentage of the vote from 5.8 to 8.7 per cent: they captured 56 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 26 in the Senate, with particular success in Rome and the South. One of the biggest factors in this electoral show of strength was the "Reggio revolt" of 1970-71, when a fascist-led popular insurrection paralysed the city of Reggio for eight months in protest against its sister city Catanzaro being named capital of Calabria under Italy's new system of regional government.

This is the national backdrop to the outbreak of fascist violence in Catania. The booklet traces each event of the period 1968-72—events which include knifings of student leaders (Manlio di Mauro, Roberto Pecoraio) and CP leaders (Mimmo Rapisarda); physical assault on CP parliamentary candidates (Benito Cerra) as well as numerous beatings administered to students, industrial militants and CP officials; bomb attacks against CP offices, a Feltrinelli bookshop, and dynamiting of CP election campaign vehicles.

[11] *Rapporto sulla Violenza Fascista a Catania*, published by the Catania Provincial Federation of the Communist Party of Italy.

The booklet publishes 27 personal testimonies from the victims of fascist violence, and it closes with the exposé of a paramilitary camp set up during the summer of 1972 by the Zafferana "Youth Front" in Catania—code-named Campo Dux. About 50 fascist teenagers attended courses in weapons and explosives handling, and unarmed combat drill.

COMPULSORY RESIDENCE RESTRICTIONS

With elections due to be held in Israel this year, it is important to note the extent of the restrictions with which the Communist Party of Israel and other democratic organisations have to contend. Scores of Israeli citizens suffer from the limitations imposed on them by the Compulsory Residence restrictions which are used against them by the Israeli military authorities, making use of Emergency regulations which have their origin in the draconian measures used by the British Mandatory power prior to Israel becoming an independent state. These regulations have been kept in force by the Israeli Government despite considerable popular opposition to them.

A considerable number of Israeli citizens, including leading officials of the Communist Party as well as other progressives, are victims of these Compulsory Residence orders which restrict their movement from the towns or villages in which they normally live.

Amongst those affected by these orders are members of the Political Bureau of the CP of Israel Emile Touma (restricted to Haifa) and Salim El-Kassem (restricted to Nazareth), members of the Secretariat of CPI Saliba Khamis and Zahl Karkabi (restricted to Nazareth and to Haifa), all the other Arab members of the Central Committee of the CPI and the leading officials of the Party districts and branches.

Some of the above have been elected to public positions but still suffer from these restrictions. Others affected in the same way include members of municipal and local councils.

Other victims include Ali Ashour, deputy chief editor of the Arabic Communist Party journal *Al-Ittihad*, Arab leaders of the Young Communist League of Israel, and non-Party lawyers and university students.

In commenting on these repressive measures Meir Vilner, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Israel says:

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"The choice of Arab Communists as the object of greater discriminatory and oppressive measures is a gross anti-Communist onslaught designed to achieve two objectives.

(a) To limit the political activity of the Communist Party—the consistent militant fighter against the government policy of aggression and expansion.

(b) To sow suspicions among the Israeli public—which is being subjected to an intensive process of brain-washing with chauvinist national sentiment—as to the patriotism of the Communist Party and its internationalist policy.

Being a party uniting Jewish and Arab Communists the CPI emphasises the validity of the community of interests of both the Jewish and Arab peoples. By calling for the implementation of the Security Council resolution No. 242, it merges patriotism with internationalism. By demanding the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Arab occupied territories, and the recognition of the sovereignty and independence of all states in the region, by demanding the respect of the rights of all the peoples in the Middle East, including the rights of the people of Israel and the Palestine Arab people, the Communist Party of Israel expresses the highest national interests of Israel".

A NEW GERMAN INTRODUCTION TO MARXISM

Reference was made in our April "Comments" to the "great blossoming" of Marxist study and publication in Western Germany.

Additional evidence of this is the publication by one of the best known and reputable bourgeois publishers of scholarly books in Western Germany of a new book on Marx and Marxism by Josef Schleifstein, head of the *Institut fur Marxistische Studien und Forschungen* (Institute for Marxist Studies and Research).[12]

The book is in five main parts—The Historical Origins of Marxism; Dialectical Materialism; The Materialist Conception of History; Political Economy; and Scientific Socialism and the Labour Movement.

It is marked by scholarship, clear exposition of the profound ideas of Marxism-Leninism, avoidance of vulgarisation or over-simplification in the name of "popularisation", extensive extracts from Marx, Engels and Lenin, a comprehensive reading list at the end, and written in a most readable style.

It should, therefore, be of great use to all interested in Marxism-Leninism—"old hands" and "new recruits" alike—and it is to be hoped that an English translation will soon be available.

In view of recent discussions in our journal (and elsewhere) about the stages of development of Marx's thought, we thought it might be of interest to give some brief extracts which deal with Schleifstein's view of the place of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* in that development and of Marx's conception of alienation.

Schleifstein discounts any theory of "break" in Marx's thought after the publication of the "1844 Manuscripts", along with any idea that these already contained everything that was important in his ideas. He praises their great importance and the profound new concepts they contain. But he criticises what he regards as inadequacies in formulation and presentation. He speaks of a development, a "ripening" in Marx's thought from an early, more immature, phase and thus regards the "1844 Manuscripts" and the later works as a continuum.

He writes:

"the 1844 Manuscripts . . . served essentially to develop his (Marx's) own ideas further and to achieve self-clarification. . . . Marx, in these Manuscripts is concerned above all, with two great groups of problems; first with the economic substantiation of his newly acquired communist ideas . . . and second, with a more fundamental analysis of Hegel's dialectical method. . . ." "Nevertheless these Manuscripts, precisely in the economic field, are still on the level of an early, elementary stage of his researches and are, in part, in direct conflict with his later conclusions. . . . Marx's economic views are here still strongly tinged with philosophy and ethics. . . . There is as yet no trace in the Paris Manuscripts of the decisive Marxist discoveries in the economic field—the analysis of the dual character of labour, and the deepening and more precise definition of the real character of the labour theory of value which this made possible. . . . An important scientific advance in the economic part of the 1844 Manuscripts is that in them, Marx approaches very much closer to the historical-materialistic conception of the whole historical process and although he still deals with the problem of alienation in abstract philosophical terms, ('his use of such unhistorical categories as 'human essence', 'species being' etc. reveal the still strong influence of Feuerbach') within these limits he makes clear that it is the capitalist exploitation of the workers which is the essence of alienation. . . ."

ALIENATION

After quoting a number of pages in the Manuscripts which deal with alienation, Schleifstein proceeds:

"these . . . passages in the Paris Manuscripts dealing with the problem of alienation must have contributed to the idea of an alleged cleavage between the young and the older Marx. The Marx of the 'Communist Manifesto' is said to be 'impoverished' by the Marx of 'Capital'. . . . Marx's development does not cease in 1844; on the contrary it really begins with the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844. . . ."

[12] Josef Schleifstein *Einfuhrung in das Studium von Marx, Engels, und Lenin*, Verlag C. H. Beck, Munich (Introduction to the Study of Marx, Engels and Lenin).

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Schleifstein then outlines the development of Marx's and Engels' ideas on alienation through The German Ideology, and then, when their ideas had matured, in the *Manifesto*, the *Critique of Political Economy* and *Anti-Dühring* and writes:

> "The abstract-philosophical veil is removed from the essential content of the problem of alienation in the mature Marx and Engels. It is now filled with an historical and economic content. From a general enthusiasm for human emancipation still influenced by Feuerbach and the Utopian Socialists, Marx now advanced to the real social class struggle now proceeding between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, to the historical role of the proletariat. For him the elimination of alienation now coincides with the emancipation of the working class resulting from the social revolution, with the elimination of class conflict and of classes in general."

TORY RIOTERS

The Church of England used to be described as "the Tory Party at prayer." This is by no means so true as it used to be (compare, for example, the recent voting record of the Bishops in the House of Lords with that of the last century). The question remains how far it was ever true without some qualifications. Perhaps it was most nearly true just before and after 1700, and a recent book about the career of a high-Tory divine Dr. Sacheverell throws some interesting light on the question.[13]

Sacheverell in 1710 preached a provocative sermon which was a calculated attack on the then Whig government. For this he was tried on a charge of treason before the House of Lords, and, though found guilty, emerged as a popular hero. London was convulsed by riots of exceptional severity and eventually the incident played a substantial part in the fall of the government. An almost accidental bonus was the ending of the Duke of Marlborough's ruinous and unpopular French war. In this case the Church, as for a considerable part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, did act as a wing of the Tory party apparatus. Yet the matter was not quite so simple as that.

When we look closer we see that these "Tory" rioters were in fact what George Rudé calls the *menu peuple* of London. That is to say they were the same sort of people, and often the very same people or their sons, as those who had worn Green Ribbons and rioted for Shaftesbury's New Country Party a generation earlier. Then the Whigs were a radical opposition to the ruling group. But from 1689 for nearly a century the Whigs were normally in power, that is they were the people whom the masses, rightly or wrongly, regarded as being to blame for their troubles. The Whigs, in short, were "them". So "Whig" mob could become "Tory" mob without really changing its composition or its objectives. Presently the circle would be complete. One of the last old-style Church and King mobs was the Birmingham one which destroyed the house of the scientist and reformer Dr. Priestley in 1791. Their sons were fighting the police in Birmingham's Bull Ring in support of the Charter. A return, yet the wheel was not just turning in the void but moving forward. With the development of an organised workers' movement there is a new level of political understanding and class consciousness.

THE BLUE NOTEBOOK

Returning to Russia from Switzerland in April 1917, Lenin left the manuscript of "Marxism on the State", along with other material abroad for safe keeping.

In July, worrying about the material, he wrote to Kamenev:

> "*Entre nous*: if they do me in, I ask you to publish my notebook—*Marxism on the State*—(it got left behind in Stockholm). It is bound in a blue cover. It contains a collection of all the quotations from Marx and Engels, likewise from Kautsky against Pannekoek. There are a number of remarks and notes, and formulations. I think it could be published after a week's work. I believe it to be important, because not only Plekhanov, but also Kautsky have bungled things".[14]

This blue notebook contained a carefully compiled series of quotations from the works of Marx and Engels on the question of the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat along with extracts from works by Kautsky, Bernstein and Pannekoek.

The quotations are marked up by Lenin, with many insertions, underlinings, and comments which are often extremely expressive (e.g. "The vulgar Bernstein has reduced everything to 'municipalisation'. The idiot!!").

The notebook was to become the basis for Lenin's *State and Revolution*, though not all the material it contained was used, for instance, Engels letters to Paul Lafargue or to the French Workers' Party or Marx's letter to Frankel and Varlin, members of the Paris Commune.

Marxism on the State was first published in

[13] *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* by Geoffrey Holmes, Eyre Methuen, £5.

[14] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36. p. 454.

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Russian in the Lenin's Miscellany XIV in 1930. It is very good to have it readily available in booklet form in English[15] as it is a splendid demonstration of Lenin's thorough and methodical research and throws light on the development of his ideas on the state in the course of the critical months of 1917.

SOVIET TRIBUTE TO HARRY POLLITT

Two years ago Professor Nikolai Matkovsky published in Russian a short study of the life of Harry Pollitt, which now has been made available in English under the title of *A True Son of the British Working Class*.[16]

Professor Matkovsky has long studied the history of the British working class movement, the history of the Communist Party in particular. He was also a close friend and comrade of Harry Pollitt. He was very well fitted, therefore, to write this short study.

He presents a brief biography stressing such aspects of Pollitt's life and work as his continuous close links with the working class, his fight for working class unity and for strong militant trade unionism, his efforts for unity in the fight against war and fascism, his uninterrupted work to build a British Communist Party strong both in theory and action.

He stresses Pollitt's consistent internationalism from the days of the *Hands Off Russia* campaign and the *Jolly George*, through *Hands Off China*, the struggle for solidarity with the Spanish Republic and the International Brigade, to the post war campaigns for peaceful coexistence. He describes Pollitt's continuous and consistent struggle for solidarity with the Soviet Union.

An aspect of Harry Pollitt's life rightly emphasised by Nikolai Matkovsky is his deep humanity, feeling for people, comradeship, tireless efforts to understand their problems and to help them in all things political and personal.

He aptly quotes from Lenin's *Left Wing Communism* that the working class "if it wants to overcome the bourgeoisie . . . must train its *own* proletarian 'class politicians'...", and shows how Harry Pollitt was amongst the great "class politicians" and class political fighters who arose in the international working class movement in the first half of this century.

British Communists will warmly appreciate this deeply felt tribute.

FRENCH MARXISTS ON SOCIOLOGY

We would like to recommend to those of our readers who know French the special issue of *La Pensée* on Marxism and Sociology.[17]

Some of the articles like that on "The Theory of Games and the Game of Ideology" or that of Francis Godard on "From the Notion of Needs to the concept of Class Practice" are intended really for specialists.

But some of the articles, like Michel Dion on "Sociology and the Materialist Dialectic", Jean-Paul Terrail on "The Relations between Political Economy and Sociology", René Mouriaux on "Part I of 'Capital' and the Sociology of the Working Class" or Jean Lojkine's article on "Political Power and the Class Struggle" will be found useful and thought-provoking for all with a general interest in Marxist-Leninist theory.

INDEX AND BACK NUMBERS OF *MTD*

The Index for Volume XVI (1972) of *Marxism Today* is now available. Copies can be obtained from 16 King Street, London WC2E 8HY. Please send stamped addressed envelope.

If readers have spare copies of back numbers of *Marxism Today* for the following years we would very much like to have them: Any month for 1957; 1958; 1959; 1960; 1961; 1962. June and October, 1966.

At the same time we have available loose copies of *Marxism Today* for all months from 1965 onwards except June and October 1966. Prices will be quoted on application.

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[15] V. I. Lenin, *Marxism on the State*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 132 pages. 15p. Available from Central Books.

[16] N. V. Matkovsky—*A True Son of the British Working Class*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 115 pp, available through Central Books, 15p.

[17] *Le Pensee*, No. 166, December 1972, 168pp, bimonthly 8.0 francs, published at 146 rue du Fauborg-Poissonière, Paris, 10e.

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Planning the Industrial Town

W. H. Evans

The writer is preparing a more comprehensive work on the subject of town planning which Lawrence & Wishart hope to publish early next year. He is an architect planner and a senior lecturer at the University of Leeds.

As recently as 1700, London was the only settlement in Britain with a population in excess of 30,000. At that time, England's population (probably less than 5,000,000 in all) was split at least five-to-one in favour of the countryside—a circumstance still not untypical of many lands. Since then, however, Great Britain has charted a course in urban development that sees her still among the leaders in the field, now with the whole world seemingly hell-bent on overtaking her.

From 1801 to 1901, the population of Great Britain quadrupled: from about 10,000,000 to nearly 40,000,000. During the same time, the rural: urban split was reversed in favour of the town. London in 1800, alone among the world's cities, had already passed the million mark, and by 1900, Greater London was approaching 7,000,000. By 1950, England, the most urbanised country in the world, had 80 per cent of her population living in places with 2,000 or more inhabitants. Over half her population lived on one-fifth of her land area—a belt extending from Kent to Cheshire. Today, nearly one-quarter live within daily reach of London. And today, London is not unique. She is no longer even the biggest. New York and Tokyo claim over 13,000,000 each, and are among several metropolitan "world-cities" numbering multi-million populations. A recent report (*The Times* April 24, 1973) reveals that Sao Paulo in Brazil, for instance, has grown from 600,000 in 1935 to 8,500,000 today, and is currently receiving immigrants at the rate of 150 per hour.

The Experience of Planning

With this experience behind her, and with no less pressing problems still to be met, it is not surprising that for modern times the art of town planning has enjoyed in Great Britain a unique development. No history of the subject, no textbook or learned review, no matter in what language, will today fail to discuss the growth of the 19th century industrial town in Great Britain, the English Garden City Movement, and the British New Towns. Other lands and other times have also much from which we can learn, but Britain's experience as the first in the field still gives a unique authority to those of her theorists and practitioners who for nearly two centuries have tried to make sense of and control the industrial city. It needs no more than the experience of everyday life in Britain to confirm how small has been their success. And it will surprise no one that an economic system dedicated to private fortune-hunting is not the most favourable for community planning and endeavour. But planning and endeavour there have been, and among the general failure, some success. The most significant achievement, however, is in the realm of theory, and from this, as it has developed and is still developing, and defective though it undoubtedly is in many ways, something may be learnt.

Contrary to what may be supposed, modern industry and factory production is not at first typically an urban phenomenon. The first mills, being water-powered and relying on local raw materials, had necessarily to site themselves where these were to be found, and therefore as often as not in rural surroundings. Since however their operation required the concentration of workers under one roof, and since time and energy were unprofitably lost by over-long journeys-to-work, the provision of workers' housing alongside a factory was not uncommon. Throughout Britain there still stand numerous gaunt clusters of mills and terrace houses, many of them now absorbed into towns.

One Industry Towns

As the size of enterprises grew, so did the size and complexity of the building works required, and by the mid-nineteenth century it was not unusual for a capitalist to found a "new town" comprising factory, warehouses, offices, shops, schools and church as well as homes for himself and his employees. An outstanding example is Saltaire (now a suburb of Bradford) built to a unified plan for Sir Titus Salt beside the River Aire. Model towns associated with large industrial enterprises have been built in many lands. From time to time they have been held up as shining examples of capitalist philanthropy.

Engels, in his *Housing Question*, wryly remarks the case of Akroyd, the founder of Akroydon near Halifax, of whom it was said by his "less philan-

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thropic competitors" that "he loved his workers, and in particular his female employees, to such an extent that . . . he ran his factories exclusively with his own children!" Engels also emphasises the advantages a shrewd capitalist would gain from this apparent "philanthropy". ". . . the English factory, mine and foundry owners had had practical experience of the pressure they can exert on striking workers if they are at the same time the landlords of those workers." It was for pressure of this kind that the "model" town of Pullman, Ohio, was later to become notorious. Company excesses in combating a strike by tenant-employees of the Pullman Car Company in 1894 led to the intervention of the US Supreme Court and half-hearted legislation to moderate the worst features inevitably implicit in the "company town."

The development of the "one-industry town" reaches its climax towards the end of the nineteenth century in the mining, shipbuilding and similar towns typical of the North and Wales, which have since become notorious for the additional evil of chronic mass unemployment, and today pose severe problems associated with their general economic decline. More typical of the recent past however has been the industrial city with numerous factories drawing from a common pool of labour, and with a supporting complement of commercial, professional and "service" undertakings. These could hardly be planned by individual capitalists, however philanthropic, and consequently, like Topsy, they at first "just growed".

It was not long, though, before the diseases inevitably associated with overcrowding and insanitary conditions began to take an alarming toll, and to threaten the better-off with contagion. As a result, from the 1840's a series of Public Health Acts empowered both national and local government to regulate the worst excesses of property speculators, and required municipalities to install proper drainage and water supply. The capitalist state was obliged to take over from individual capitalists the rudimentary duties of town planning. Official town planning in the United Kingdom has ever since reflected its sanitary origins, and until recently was regarded mainly as an aspect of public health.

During the second half of the 19th century there developed also a "town planning movement" with a bolder perspective. Except in terms of spas, fashionable residential quarters, and grandiose schemes for boulevards and processional ways, town planning as it had been known and practised throughout thousands of years of civilisation was in Britain a dead art in the early years of the Industrial Revolution. The experience of the past in any case had been in terms of fortifications, handicraft production and commerce. Apart from one half-completed essay in pre-revolutionary France, no architect had ever turned his hand to the design of the factory town. The factory itself, and its associated utilitarian works, were by the fashionable architects themselves regarded as unworthy of their art and dismissed as "mere engineering". It consequently fell to others to propose solutions for the urban problems posed by the new methods of production.

Owen and the Utopians

The first outstanding figure is that of the Welshman Robert Owen (1771-1858). This remarkable man had from a humble beginning risen by his middle 'twenties to the level of managing director of a spinning mill, and because of the success of his unusual methods and theories was—although an outspoken socialist—listened to with respect. Widespread unemployment had followed the ending of the Napoleonic Wars, and Owen proposed the founding of numerous industrial villages throughout the United Kingdom wherein those otherwise unable to find work could build prosperous communities based on co-operative production in their mill and surrounding fields. A similar but less-convincing proposal was made at about the same time by the French socialist Fourier, but in spite of numerous experiments in both the old and the new worlds, these early schemes, conceived in terms of a single enterprise and an island of socialism in a capitalist world, were bound to fail.

The ideal however persisted—especially among socialists—and throughout the 19th century the theme of "Utopia" had taken such a hold that Marx and Engels by the 'forties were using the name itself to characterise that tendency in working class political theory which stood in opposition to their own. But we should not overlook the warm regard in which they held the pioneering work of Owen and Fourier, applauding their trenchant criticism of capitalism and their vision of the better society modern industry was making possible. The theme of the perfect industrial city is kept alive throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. By the 'eighties and 'nineties the fictional Utopia was becoming something of a vogue among socialist propagandists, and a notable exchange took place between Edward Bellamy, who wrote *Looking Backward* and William Morris whose *News from Nowhere* was prompted in reply. From the standpoint of British town planning, Bellamy's book was significant also in that it stimulated the pioneering work of Ebenezer Howard, who, in 1898, published his proposal for "Garden Cities" as "a peaceful road to reform".

"Garden Cities"

A direct link can be established between the new towns which in Britain are still being built, and the Garden Cities of Letchworth and Welwyn which Howard was to pioneer in the opening decades of the

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twentieth century. The success of his ideas lies mainly in their timing. By the turn of the century, greater state intervention in town planning was inevitable. While factory chimneys continued to belch smoke over nearby slums, widespread public transport was providing the means whereby towns could expand and was at last making it possible for homes to be placed well away from workplaces. The era of suburban expansion—in which we are still living—had begun, and had brought with it a host of problems: new sewers, new water mains, new traffic jams, and the growing remoteness of the inner city from its rural hinterland. Also by this time, the slums which the first flush of industrial expansion had thrown up in the old city centres, and which in spite of protest still yielded profitable rents, now had to be cleared to make way for the new railways, roads and offices required to serve the business needs of the modern industrial city.

The "Free Market"

During the period up to 1920, the provision of workers' housing had for the most part been undertaken by private builders and landlords, who with their financial backers reaped a steady harvest in the best traditions of capitalism by letting out the meanest apartments and houses for the highest rents the market would bear. As *laissez faire* and the small enterprise gives way to modern monopoly and the reign of finance-capital, a limited number of super-cities begin to grow and to coalesce into our modern "conurbations". In these circumstances, a "free market" in housing produces the intolerable conditions which still blight the lives of millions, and the demand for houses at fair rents becomes a central and perennial theme in domestic politics.

State intervention eventually becomes inevitable. Rent control—the first measure to be adopted—is outside our immediate interest here. In terms of town planning, the most notable result is the housing estate, which in the period between the wars became the typical town planning answer to contemporary problems. Amid green fields, cottages and cottage gardens attempted to recapture the rural virtues which the modern city was believed to have destroyed. There were even those who saw in the municipal housing estate, with its municipal ownership of land and buildings, yet another gradual road to socialism along which Ramsay Macdonald was to lead them on and on and on and up and up and up. Needless to say, the monopolists who relied upon a plentiful supply of cheap labour reasonably near at hand, saw no threat in the investment of state funds to provide homes for their workers. And if as a result excessive rents were kept in check, that gave yet another excuse for keeping wages low. Nonetheless, the planned cottage estate was a vast improvement upon slumdom.

The planned suburban expansion of a town inevitably involves decisions concerning the size and whereabouts of new shops, schools and other "community facilities". It is inevitably a minor exercise in town planning, and this is reflected in the borrowing from Howard's Garden City Movement of the term "garden suburb" which came to be attached to municipal housing estates. The setting of parcels of land for this use or that leads also to the "zoning" of land—around the town at first, then within its built-up boundaries—in order to have some unified control over the general pattern of future growth. "Use-zoning"—the capitalist substitute for social ownership—is now firmly established as a major component of British planning legislation, and is the basis of capitalism's negative alternative to positive planning: "development control".

The Suburbs

The suburb was regarded for some time as the answer to most urban problems, but by the thirties the continued outward growth of cities was causing widespread alarm because of "ribbon development" and the loss of open countryside. Sprawling cities with six and seven figure population were posing unprecedented problems, and solutions such as those Howard had advocated began to receive widespread support. In its essentials, his scheme was one of decentralisation: the breaking down of the super-city into a city cluster, each part of which would be a separate entity, divided by open country from its neighbours and with its own industry and social facilities. These separate garden cities would never be allowed to grow beyond 30,000 or so, and would be interconnected by "rapid transit". At the centre of each would be a park, and in each all industry would be banished to a peripheral belt. The land would be purchased at agricultural values and kept by the city fathers under one ownership in such a way that most of the enhanced value consequent upon development eventually accrued to the community as a whole. In the decentralised old city itself, parks and public buildings would take the place of slums, and further growth would take the form of additional "daughter" cities.

There were also those, largely inspired by ideas from overseas, who urged rather the wholesale reconstruction of the city into new multi-storey forms capable of containing huge populations within a manageable area. In practice, there was a shift towards flat building in the 'thirties, but this was more as a consequence of profiteering in land than of theorising. Quarry Hill Flats at Leeds is one of the few examples of a municipal housing scheme planned to prove the superiority of continental socialism and the city-centre flat over the folksy Fabianism of the suburban cottage. But they were

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built at a time of pinch-penny economies and, denied the social facilities planned as an essential complement to the flats themselves, they have served mainly to confirm the deep-seated preference of the English proletarian for his house and garden.

Towards Giant Cities

By the outbreak of war in 1939, town planning in theory at least was developing apace, and during the war itself a number of notable advances were made. New plans were published for Coventry and London, and proposals accepted for a number of new towns. A new act of Parliament was prepared, and with the post-war victory of Labour, town planning enjoyed for a short time official recognition with its own minister and ministry. The 1947 Town Planning Act still remains the basis of our planning law.

In spite of limitations inevitable under capitalism, the first new towns were a remarkable success and have attracted world-wide attention. Although for the most part sited to receive big city "overspill", they were designed not as satellites to the big cities, but as self-contained settlements. They have now been followed by others designated in the second resurgence of planning consequent upon Labour's return to power in the 'sixties. But today the tendency is to accept the super-city as an inevitable consequence of modern life, and the latest new towns are for the most part conceived as parts of large urban complexes.

The tendency towards giant cities is a reflection of the tendency towards giantism in the modern economy. One large factory replaces a host of smaller ones. "Economies of scale" are claimed for undertakings wherein the entire production of a nation's (or even a continent's) requirements for this or that commodity is undertaken more-or-less under one roof. Complex interlocking and mutually dependent networks develop. There are advantages in diversifying production within the one organisation. A computing centre, a research laboratory, an administrative headquarters is inefficient below a minimum "threshold" size, and uneconomic unless involved in the servicing of a giant organisation.

There clearly must be upper limits beyond which costs outstrip gains. But it would be reactionary as well as utopian to dream of reversing this trend in favour of the small scale industry of the past. Modern communications make it possible of course to scatter the parts of industrial combines. But they subdivide most readily "horizontally" rather than "vertically": that is, in such a way that were each part to be placed separately in a different small town, the employment available would be restricted in one place to research, in another to administration, and in another to "blue-collar" work. The evils of the one-industry town would be resurrected.

Thus from the point of view of the modern economy, the super-city is justified. Advantages are claimed also in the range of facilities it can support—from Olympic stadia to universities—although here it could be argued that Athens, Florence and Venice in their time, with comparatively small communities, enjoyed a richer culture than does modern London, Tokyo or New York. And even today, our greatest universities are not in our largest towns.

This acceptance of the super-city is not confined to British town planning, nor even to planning in the capitalist world. Recent pronouncements of Soviet planners indicate that in the USSR also, previous attempts to contain the growth of conurbations in favour of a widespread dispersal of smaller towns, is giving way to policies which see future urban development in terms of some 80 big city agglomerations or "urban galaxies", similar in overall form, if not in size and detail, to what Howard had in mind.

Strategic Problems

Whether justified or not, it is the reality of the city region which now faces British town planning with its most pressing tasks. While within the big cities themselves one panic measure is succeeded by another, in some of the new towns now being built a more principled approach is possible from which we may gain some indication of an appropriate strategy.

There is at the moment considerable ferment in professional thinking. On some grounds there is agreement: the city must be designed so that it can grow, and for this the dart-board form with an embedded core is unsuitable, and open-ended layouts (generally of linear form) preferred. The city must grow also at such a rate that there are no severe imbalances in the age and sex distribution of the population. (There is much pious talk also about a balance of social classes, but this is usually to excuse the introduction of "private enterprise" and high rents.) The city should develop also in viable stages, section by section, and with homes, jobs and social services always in step. There is less need than hitherto to banish all industry to one or two remote industrial zones—a more widespread distribution may be preferable.

The disagreements relate mainly to the provision to be made for traffic, and the consequences thereof. In the new town of Milton Keynes, where the highest levels of car ownership are fully catered for, everything is spaciously arranged around a network of dual carriageways. But a snag appears. No matter how many cars there may eventually be, the majority now and for some considerable time have to rely on buses, and the proportion of a normal population unable to drive themselves about is never likely to fall much below half. So there have to be buses. But it is speedily apparent that just as the car likes the town well spread-out, the bus likes it compact. The

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more people living within easy reach of a bus stop, the better the service which can be provided.

Some of the other new towns now being built highlight even more vividly the contradiction between car and bus. Runcorn in Cheshire proposes separate route systems for each in the knowledge that it is impossible to make the same road work satisfactorily for large numbers of cars and buses at the same time. It is not only a matter of conflict between vehicles. A high capacity road for automobiles is not compatible with pedestrian safety—nor indeed with any aspect of normal urban living, and it should therefore be sited away from homes and the centres of community life. A local bus route, on the other hand, is useless unless it links these places as intimately as possible. The interests of public transport and the pedestrian *en masse* coincide, while those of the pedestrian and the private motor car *en masse* are utterly opposed.

This lesson is barely yet understood in our new towns, and not at all in our existing cities. The policy here has been to make the maximum possible provision for vehicular traffic in general, and then to devise a split in the passenger load between cars and buses such that the total vehicle flow remained within road capacity. Thus either the cars or the buses would be where they were not wanted, and each would be getting in the way of the other. Needless to say, this "modal split" is to be secured by the operation of pricing policies aimed at keeping the *hoi polloi* out of the way of the managing director. Currently the vogue is for "bus only" lanes and other half-measures necessitated by the refusal to face up to the total impossibility of reconciling the private use of the automobile with the large industrial city. Tactically, it is necessary to demand that the centres of pedestrian activity be defined; that an adequate public transport system be designed to link them as directly as possible; and that all other traffic be confined to times and places where there would be no conflict with public transport efficiency or a safe and civilised environment. The implications for car ownership and usage in towns is profound, but will have to be faced. Profound too is the need to rethink public transport in all its aspects so that movement in towns becomes a pleasant social experience instead of a selfish free-for-all.

Planning and Social Change

Strategically, the long-term solution to the problems of the super-city probably lies in the breaking of it down into what has been called a "confederation of neighbourhoods". In each of these neighbourhoods would live a community large enough to be socially viable and manage its own affairs, but not so large that traffic and other big-city problems began to appear within it. They would be linked by efficient external transport systems to each other and to a regional complex of factories, offices, entertainment centres and the like, so that throughout the country all could enjoy the fruits of big-city living without its drawbacks.

This brief review has revealed for each stage in the development of modern industry a typical urban plan. In the beginning, an industrial village of homes associated with the isolated mill. Then the company town and the single-industry town. Now the industrial conurbation. Tomorrow the federation of settlements in an urban galaxy. We have moved from the isolated village to the scale of the village in the regional city. But what is technically possible, today more than ever before, looks for its achievement to the necessary changes in society which alone can bring real and lasting progress. Town planning in a capitalist Britain can never achieve one-tenth of its potential, and what it does achieve stands always at risk of being perverted to ends contrary to those that were intended. Slum clearance and comprehensive redevelopment—both in their time battle-cries of progressive town-planning—are today the excuse for urban destruction, on a scale which outstrips the Blitz, in the interests of property speculators and the British Road Federation. The division of the city into healthy communities becomes the excuse for rigidly separated class-districts and racial ghettoes. The rehabilitation of homes forces rents up and the workers out.

Any discussion of town planning today inevitably leads us into wider problems of regional and national significance, where greater issues than we have touched upon await solution: population growth and distribution; local government; town and country; dereliction; pollution; fuel policy. In these matters also British town planning has an honourable heritage: especially in the pioneering regionalism of the Scot Patrick Geddes. It daily becomes more abundantly clear that the socialist planning of our resources advocated at the beginning of the industrial era by Robert Owen is long overdue, and that to delay any longer may be courting technical as well as political disaster.

THE ALTHUSSER DEBATE

We have several contributions still in hand to the discussion of the work of Louis Althusser. We hope to publish these over the next few issues of *Marxism Today*. But the Editorial Board has decided that no further contributions will be accepted to the discussion except any concluding remarks which John Lewis and Louis Althusser may wish to make.

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Ireland—Common Cause of British and Irish People

Jack Woddis

The present crisis in Northern Ireland is basically not a problem *within* Northern Ireland but one which arises from Britain's relationship with Northern Ireland, and indeed with the whole of Ireland. That the Irish problem was primarily a British one was well understood by the Communist movement from its very beginnings; and this understanding, first voiced by Marx and Engels, has also animated the policy and activity of the Communist Party of Great Britain from its foundation right down to today.

Marx and Engels on Ireland

The special attention given to this question by Marx and Engels, from the 1840's, when they first began to develop as communists, right up to the 1890's, is reflected in the scores of articles, speeches, letters, reports, notes and so on which they devoted to the Irish question. A recent collection[1], prepared in the Soviet Union and containing over 400 pages of such documents, demonstrates strikingly the extent to which they not only studied Irish history, analysed her economic ruination by Britain, and were inspired by the age-long resistance of the Irish people, but also the consistent and principled fashion in which they worked, especially in Britain, to rally popular support for the Irish cause.

Over this entire period of fifty years in which Marx and Engels developed their views on Ireland they adhered firmly to what became a major strategic purpose of all their work in connection with Ireland, namely, to disclose that the Irish and British working class had a common interest in joining forces against their common enemy, the British ruling class, and to strive to achieve the unity of these forces in practice.

It was, in fact, in connection with formulating his ideas for the resolution on Ireland, which he submitted to the International Working Men's Association in 1869, that Marx first put forward the revolutionary concept: "Any nation which oppresses another forges its own chains".

[1] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *On Ireland* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1971).

Marx and Engels noted that it was the onset of the bourgeois period in Britain that led to the decisive phase in the British conquest of Ireland which Engels termed "England's first colony".[2] With each expansion of the capitalist system in Britain and the breakdown of feudal barriers, the Irish people suffered a further blow. As Engels commented in a letter to Marx[3]:

> "Ireland has been stunted in her development by the English invasion and thrown centuries back".

Marx and Engels showed how the Irish people were crushed in turn by Elizabeth, James 1st, Oliver Cromwell and William of Orange. With their landholdings robbed and given to English invaders, the Irish people became "outlawed in their own land and transformed into a nation of outcasts".[4]

The nineteenth century saw the rapid growth of British capitalism, and just as rapid a decline of Ireland. The Act of Union of 1801 abolished the Irish Parliament, swept away the protective tariffs which that Parliament had adopted to defend Ireland's growing industries, and condemned Ireland to become an agrarian appendage of Britain.

The system of exploitation introduced after the Act of Union combined the worst features of direct capitalist exploitation with a semi-feudal appropriation of the surplus product. This system reduced the Irish people to terrible poverty. There were recurrent crop failures and famines, including the appalling potato famine of 1845-7. Some starved. Others fled across the Atlantic.

"Business-like Extinction"

Before long a new disaster overwhelmed the Irish people. Following the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 and the fall in bread prices, the British bourgeoisie sought after cheaper livestock and meat supplies. The big landlords and larger tenant farmers in Ireland found it more to their interests to turn to large-scale grazing

[2] May 23, 1856. See *On Ireland*, op cit p. 83.

[3] January 19, 1870. *ibid.* p. 286.

[4] Frederick Engels: "Notes for the Preface to a Collection of Irish Songs", *ibid.* p. 270.

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instead of renting their land in small plots for growing grain or potatoes. The result was wholesale evictions of Irish tenants, and mass emigration.

Marx described the process as a "quiet business-like extinction"[5]. In 1855-66, he wrote, "1,032,694 Irishmen have been displaced by about one million cattle, pigs and sheep".[6] No wonder that in *Capital* (Vol. 1, Ch. XXV), he described Ireland as "only an agricultural district of England, marked off by a wide channel from the country to which it yields corn, wool, cattle, industrial and military recruits". The resultant fall in Ireland's population was catastrophic. Marx, in *Capital*, cites figures to show that the population fell from 8,222,664 in 1841 to 5½ million in 1866. Since the actual fall began with the 1846 famine, this meant that in less than twenty years Ireland lost over 5/16ths of its people.

This was the heavy price Ireland had to pay for being an agricultural colony of Britain. The whole process was summed up later by Lenin in the following terms:

> "Britain owes her 'brilliant' economic development and the 'prosperity' of her industry and commerce largely to her treatment of the Irish peasantry. . . . While Britain 'flourished', Ireland moved towards extinction and remained an undeveloped, semi-barbarous, purely agrarian country, a land of poverty-stricken tenant farmers."[7]

A Common Task

Thus Marx, Engels and Lenin saw clearly that the root causes of Ireland's economic backwardness, poverty and social ills lay in her age-long oppression and exploitation by the British ruling class, especially after the burgeoning of British capital. Consequently the first essential step was to end British economic, political and military domination, and defeat the forces of reaction in Ireland which acted as the internal ally of the British ruling class.

This still remains a major task of the Irish people, for the establishment of the Irish Republic over fifty years ago in no way meant the end of British imperialist exploitation and oppression, even if it marked a new phase in Ireland's struggle and a certain advance towards full liberation.

The second major contribution of Marx and Engels to the Irish question was their insistence, throughout their political activities, that the task of ending British imperialism's domination of Ireland was a common task of the Irish and British working people. Furthermore, that it was not only a duty for the British working class to oppose their own ruling class on this question, but even more that it was in the direct interest of the British workers themselves that this domination of Ireland by British capitalism should be ended.

The interconnection between the struggle of the Irish people for national liberation and that of the British people for democratic and social liberation is traced by Marx and Engels in numerous passages in their writings, emphasising that British reaction always drew strength from the oppression of Ireland. "By engaging in the conquest of Ireland" wrote Marx, "Cromwell threw the English Republic out of the window."[8]

From the very commencement of their interest in Ireland, Marx and Engels urged the British workers to assist the Irish people in their struggle for liberation. Engels, for example, was advocating as early as the 1840's the closest links between the Chartists and the Irish independence movement. The British workers were not indifferent to the cause of Ireland, as indicated by the fact that three and a half million people signed the second Chartist Petition which was submitted to the British Parliament on May 2, 1842. Among the six points of the petition was the demand that Ireland be allowed to annul the enforced Union with England of 1801.

Engels was greatly stimulated by Feargus O'Connor's address to the Irish people, published in the first issue of the *Northern Star* in 1848. Stressing that O'Connor was speaking "not only as an Irishman but also, and primarily, as an English democrat"[9], Engels noted O'Connor's reminder of the three and a half million signatures received to the earlier petition, and his approving remarks that "now the English Chartists again protested against the Irish Coercion Bill in numerous petitions". Engels draws attention to O'Connor's conclusion:

> "He finally stressed that the oppressed classes in both England and Ireland must fight together and conquer together or continue to languish under the same burden and live in the same misery and dependence on the privileged and ruling capitalist class".

[5] Karl Marx: "Notes for an Undelivered Speech on Ireland". *ibid.* p. 124.

[6] *Ibid.* p. 121.

[7] V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 148.

[8] Karl Marx: "Outline of the Report of the Irish Question to the Communist Educational Association of German Workers in London", December 16, 1867. *On Ireland*, op cit. p. 128.

[9] Frederick Engels: "Feargus O'Connor and the Irish People": January 9, 1848, *ibid.* p. 49.

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Marx, Engels and the Fenians

Marx and Engels rejoiced at every sign of British working class sympathy for the Irish cause, and castigated any activities which rendered it more difficult to unite the Irish independence struggle with the British working class movement. In a letter to Engels in which he touches on the campaign in Britain in 1867 in support of the Fenian prisoners, Marx commented "Last Tuesday, too, there was a stormy demonstration for the Fenians . . . This business stirs the feelings of the intelligent part of the working class here".[10] On the following day Engels, too, noted the growing support for the Irish sruggle: ". . . the London proletarians declare every day more openly for the Fenians".[11]

When a group of Fenians, however, in an unsuccessful attempt to liberate their jailed leaders, set off an explosion in Clerkenwell Prison, which resulted in the destruction of several neighbouring houses and the death of several innocent civilians, as well as wounding 120, both Marx and Engels were highly critical of this action, which they regarded as "stupid" and as a blow against the unity of the British and Irish working people. Marx, in terms which are by no means irrelevant to today's struggle, wrote:

> "The last exploit of the Fenians in Clerkenwell was a very stupid thing. The London masses, who have shown great sympathy for Ireland, will be made wild by it and driven into the arms of the government party. One cannot expect the London proletarians to allow themselves to be blown up in honour of the Fenian emissaries".[12]

Engels was equally forthright about the whole "stupid affair", pouring scorn on "the idea of liberating Ireland by setting a London tailor's shop on fire!"[13]

The First International and Ireland

What concerned Marx and Engels in particular was the necessity to forge links between the British and Irish working people and to break down the prejudice and hostility which the British ruling class had zealously fostered over so many years. Marx appraised very highly the activities of British workers in the late 1860's in support of the campaigns on behalf of the Irish political prisoners, and throughout this period he worked successfully to involve the International Working Men's Association (set up in 1864, with headquarters in London) in these activities. On October 24, 1869, a mass demonstration was held in London in support of the demand for amnesty for the Irish prisoners. The demonstration, which was organised by the Reform League with the help of the General Council of the International, was highly successful. Thousands marched to Trafalgar Square and then on to Hyde Park where a huge meeting of some 200,000 took place under the slogan "Justice for Ireland!"

Commenting on this demonstration, Marx declared that its "main feature . . . was that at least part of the English working class had lost their prejudice "against the Irish".[14] Engels was equally enthusiastic about this demonstration—"the most imposing demonstration London has seen for years".[15]

Under the guidance of Marx, the General Council of the International devoted considerable attention to the Irish question in this period, and, in the aftermath of the demonstration referred to above, it debated the attitude both of the British Government and of the British working class towards the Irish question. The debate was opened by Marx, who had been largely responsible for drafting the resolutions, which, after prolonged debate, were carried by the Council.

The resolutions were immediately sent to the hundreds of trade union branches affiliated to the International. Only one, a small branch of the furriers, opposed the resolutions, but the General Council did not rest on this 99 per cent support. It sent one of its members to discuss with this single opposing branch, and won it over, showing how the International worked to educate the British working class in an internationalist spirit and win it for positive solidarity with the Irish struggle.

The campaign for the release of the prisoners continued for several years. A new phase of this campaign was marked on November 3, 1872, when a giant demonstration for a general amnesty was organised in Hyde Park by the Irish members of the International, together with British and other members of the General Council. At least 30,000 attended, and Engels, noting that "at least half had a green ribbon or a green leaf in their

[10] Letter of Marx to Engels, November 7, 1867: *ibid.* p. 144.

[11] Letter of Engels to Kugelmann, November 8, 1867: *ibid.* p. 145.

[12] Letter of Marx to Engels, December 14, 1867: *ibid*, p. 149.

[13] Letter of Engels to Marx, December 19, 1867: *ibid*, p. 149.

[14] Karl Marx: "On the Refusal by the English Press to Take Notice of the Growth of Sympathy with Ireland among English Workers": Speech in the General Council, October 26, 1869: *ibid*, p. 151. (More than a hundred years later the capitalist press in Britain displays the same virtual silence over the actions of British people in support of national liberation movements—J.W.).

[15] Letter of Engels to Marx, November 1, 1869: *ibid*, p.274-5.

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buttonhole to show they were Irish",[16] commented that it was "the first time the English and Irish sections of our population have united in friendship".

This tradition was apparently still making itself felt over fifteen years later, although opportunism was clearly having its influence, Engels, when asked on September 20, 1888, what was "the attitude of the English workers towards the Irish movement?", replied: "The masses are *for* the Irish. The organisations, and the labour aristocracy in general, follow Gladstone and the liberal bourgeois and do not go further than these".[17]

After one Hundred Years

From the foregoing brief resume it can be seen how much of their time and attention Marx and Engels devoted to uniting the British and Irish movements, and how they encouraged every activity that contributed to that end, and equally opposed actions or concepts that threatened to weaken this move towards unity.

In a letter to Kugelmann[18] Marx emphasised the necessity of the British working class to separate "its policy with regard to Ireland most definitely from the ruling classes" and make "common cause with the Irish . . . And this must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland but as a demand in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading strings of the ruling-classes, because *it* will have to join with them in a common front against Ireland".

Less than two weeks later, in a letter to Engels[19], Marx again emphasised:

> "*It is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working-class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland. . . .*"

In another document of the same period[20] Marxs points out that:

> "Ireland is the only pretext the English Government has for retaining a *big standing army*, which, if need be, as has happened before, can be used against the English workers after having done its military training in Ireland."[21]

In the hundred years since Marx and Engels campaigned for support for the Irish struggle in the First International and in the British working class movement of that time important changes have taken place. Monopoly capitalism has come into being, and has since developed into state monopoly capitalism which has assisted the emergence of giant international firms. The struggle of the Irish people led to the declaration of the Irish Republic in January 1919, and the refusal of the British Government to accept the Republic, with the consequent imperialist intervention and partition of Ireland into an "Irish Free State" of 26 counties, with six counties in the North torn away to form a Northern Ireland puppet statelet linked to Britain.

The main enemy of the Irish people is no longer the landed aristocracy of Marx's day but rather the big monopolies which exploit both the British and Irish working people. These changes, however, as important as they are, in no way change the essence of the conclusions drawn by Marx and Engels in the last century—namely that the British and Irish working people face a common enemy, that they need to wage a common struggle, and that it is in the direct interests of the British working people themselves, if they are to defend their own democratic rights and advance to the defeat of the British ruling class, that they end the British domination of Ireland.

Attitude of the CPGB

This has been the approach which the Communist Party of Great Britain has followed consistently ever since its foundation over fifty years ago. When the British Communist Party was first established in August 1920 Ireland herself was in the midst of a grave crisis, her people having been forced to take up arms to defend their Republic which British imperialism refused to accept. The reply of the British ruling class to Ireland's rightful claim for sovereignty and independence was war and the Black and Tans.

The year 1920 had seen a number of significant declarations and actions by the British Labour Movement in support of the Irish struggle. For

[16] Frederick Engels: "Letters from London": November 14, 1872: *ibid*, p. 307-8.

[17] An Interview with Engels, published in the *New York Volkszeitung*, September 20, 1888. *ibid*, p. 343.

[18] November 29, 1869: *ibid*, p. 280.

[19] December 10, 1869: *ibid*, p. 284.

[20] Karl Marx: "Confidential Communication", March 28, 1870: *ibid*, p. 162-3.

[21] Today Ireland is not the only, or necessarily the main pretext for the British ruling class maintaining a big army. Other overseas "strategic interests" and investments, as well as false arguments about "Soviet military threats" are today's excuses for the huge military expenditure. But Marx's main point here, namely the use that British rulers could make of an army trained in Ireland for actions against the British working class, is all too dangerously relevant. One need only consider the views of Brigadier Kitson and other military top-brass, with their advocacy of special training for the British army, based on the experience of Northern Ireland, for possible use in Britain against "urban protest" movements and "industrial unrest", to realise the threat from this quarter.

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sections of the movement the struggle of the Irish working people was linked with the movement of solidarity with the young Soviet Union, expressed particularly in the action of the London dockers, on 10th May, 1920, which prevented the loading of the *Jolly George* with arms intended for use against the Russian Soviet Republic.

In June 1920, John MacLean published his pamphlet *The Irish Tragedy—Scotland's Disgrace,* calling for industrial action by British workers in support of Ireland. South Wales miners decided to strike one day a month until British troops were withdrawn from Russia and Ireland.[22] The Hands Off Russia Movement was supplemented by a Hands Off Ireland Movement.

When the British Labour Party met in conference at Scarborough, June 22 to 25, 1920, it adopted, by a decisive majority, a resolution on Ireland which demanded that the principle of "free and absolute self-determination" should be applied to Ireland, the British Army of occupation withdrawn, and the Irish people enabled to elect a Constituent Assembly for all Ireland. This resolution was a victory for the left of the movement, and particularly for Ernest Cant[23] who had worked hard for this outcome in Scotland.

This clear voice of British Labour was carried forward into Parliament where, on 11th November, 1920, the Labour Party representatives put forward proposals based on the Scarborough resolution, and demanding the withdrawal of "the British Army of occupation", with the establishment of an Irish Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of proportional representation to determine the question of Irish government. The British Government, determined to push forward its plans for partition, rejected the Labour Party proposals. The Parliamentary leaders of the British Labour Party then visited Dublin where a thousand delegates attending a special conference of the Irish Labour Party and T.U.C. unanimously endorsed the British Labour Party proposals. Thus, in the words of the *Report of Labour Commission to Ireland,* "for the first time since 1914, the British and Irish Labour Movement were in true alignment on the great issue of Irish self-government."

But the deviousness of the British ruling class, and especially of Lloyd George, was able to sow confusion and compromise in the ranks of the Irish people and prevent a united struggle by British and Irish labour, together with the republicans.

[22] See *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution*: Desmond Greaves, 1971; pp. 189-190.

[23] Shortly after Ernest Cant became a foundation member of the Communist Party.

It was in the midst of these critical struggles and negotiations, covering the years 1920-1922 that the young British Communist Party had to give leadership to the British labour movement on the Irish question. From the very beginning and without any qualifications it supported the Irish Republic and opposed the British Government and its oppression. A Statement of the Executive Committee published in *The Communist* on November 25, 1920, entitled 'Communists and Ireland', starts with the words:

> "The news that comes daily from Ireland is in itself a summons to the Communist Party of Great Britain. . . . A nation is being murdered under our eyes—not in Armenia, but within a hundred miles of our own shores . . . by British men, carrying out the orders of a British Government."

Replying to those who argued that the Irish struggle, being a "nationalist struggle", was not the concern of socialists whose task was the "class struggle", the Executive Committee statement pointed out:

> "In such a case as Ireland's—the case of a small nation held in forcible suppression by a great Imperialist State—the national struggle and the class struggle are inseparable from one another. The struggle against imperialism for national independence is a necessary phase of the struggle against capitalism for the workers' independence".[24]

When, at the end of 1921, Lloyd George put forward his proposals for partition to the plenipotentiaries of the Republic who were in London at the time for negotiations with the British Government, the British Communist Party obtained advance information of the proposals and of the agreement by Griffith and Collins, the Republic's leading negotiators, to accept them. It was decided to warn the republican leaders in Dublin of the intended capitulation of their negotiators. William Gallacher was sent to Dublin by night-boat to contact the IRA leaders. Gallacher explained what happened:[25]

> "The next day I met several of the leaders, but they were scarcely prepared to believe it. Several declared that Collins would never sign such a Treaty. But the official word came over while I was there and they then had to face a situation bristling with difficulties and peril. Cathal Brugha was easily one of the finest characters thrown up by Irish history, and declared that he would never accept the Treaty, but conscious of where that put him, he added 'But I won't be the

[24] See also: William Paul: *The Irish Crisis*: C.P.G.B. 1921, pp. 13-14.

[25] William Gallacher: *Ireland—Can it Remain Neutral*? 1941, pp. 10-11. See also: C. Desmond Greaves: *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution*: 1971. pp. 268-9.

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first to set Irishmen shedding Irishmen's blood'. I said I could understand how he felt on that, but nevertheless, he had to take account of the fact that if the others once got established as a government, they would have no hesitation (they would have the full backing of Britain) in shedding Irishmen's blood".

". . . I then went on to urge on them the necessity of a wide social programme that would gather the workers and poor farmers around them, and this would make them invincible. I raised a whole series of points that would have made such a programme. Cathal Brugha cut in on me and he said very quietly, but very emphatically, 'Gallacher, we know you and your colleagues in Glasgow have always been good friends of Ireland. As such we are glad to have you with us. But don't try to bring Communism here, we don't want it. We have our own faith and by that we'll stand or fall'. I looked at his strong clean face, with its piercing eyes and long firm lip—the face of a man who was selfless in the cause to which he was devoted, and I wished with all my heart I could get him to understand.

"It was no use. He was ready to live or die for the Republic, but a programme such as I suggested was 'not his business'."

Against the Betrayal

And so the betrayal took place, Ireland was partitioned and her people plunged into civil war. This was with the acquiescence of the British right-wing Labour leaders, but partition was never accepted by the British Communist Party. In the House of Commons in December 1922, when the Bill ratifying the Constitution of the 'Irish Free State' was debated, the Communist Shapurji Saklatvala, who had been elected to Parliament on the Labour Party ticket, put forward a motion to reject the Bill. The motion was seconded by J. Walton Newbold, elected to Parliament that year as a Communist. In his speech (which, he made clear, was not made on behalf of the Labour Party) Saklatvala declared that the Anglo-Irish Treaty "was based upon coercion and was signed under duress". The only solution, he asserted, would be one based on the recognition of the Irish People's "right to a genuine and *bona fide* self-determined voice of their own".

Recalling the "disgrace" of the 1801 Act of Union, Saklatvala declared that he could not be "a party to another and a greater mockery . . . even if you were all unanimous".

But the lone voice of the Communists went unheeded in the British Parliament. Ireland was betrayed in London as she had been in Dublin.

Less than ten years earlier the British working class had been still displaying the same solidarity towards the Irish struggle that had been noted previously by Marx and Engels. When the Dublin workers went on strike in 1913 they received magnificent help from the British labour movement.

"Pressed for funds with which to wage the struggle, Larkin and Connolly[26] turned to England and Scotland from which they received a burst of enthusiastic solidarity such as had not been known since the great dockers' strike of 1888. Funds were granted by virtually every union, by the TUC, by the Labour Party, and by the Co-operative Union. . . . (The) Trade Unions and Socialist Societies combined to stock a food-ship which the CWS supplied at cost price, they chartering the ship as their share. English and Scottish Socialists volunteered by the hundred to find homes for the children of strikers 'for the duration'."[27]

By 1916, however, the war-time jingoism which engulfed considerable sections of the British working class, and the inability even of many left groups of the labour movement to grasp the relationship between the Easter Rising of 1916 for *national liberation* and their own struggle for *social emancipation,* made it easier for the right-wing labour leaders to persuade the majority of workers to withhold their support from the Irish people during this critical period.

As we have seen above, the movement of solidarity with the Irish struggle emerged again in the period 1920 to 1921, but by 1922, confused by the betrayal of Griffith and Collins and outwitted by the British ruling class, British Labour, in the main, had turned its back on Ireland. Only the British Communist Party remained as consistent supporters of the Irish national cause.

For over fifty years our Party has adhered to the position stated in 1922—opposition to partition, and full support for the Irish people in their struggle to reunify their country. Repeatedly we have drawn attention to the wound inflicted on the body of Ireland. Thus in 1932, at the time of the Irish struggle against the land annuities, Bill Rust wrote:[28]

"The Irish masses have again raised the banner of revolt against their ancient enemy. Undismayed by past defeats and the threats of renewed violence a tiny state has challenged all the might of British imperialism and awakened an echo of admiration in the masses throughout the world. . . . From the standpoint of the revolutionary working class the

[26] The leaders of the strike.

[27] T. A. Jackson: *Ireland on her Own*, 1971 edition: pp. 377-8.

[28] William Rust: "The War on Ireland": *Labour Monthly*, August, 1932. See also: J. Shields: "The Republican Congress and Ireland's Fight": *Labour Monthly*, November 1934.

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present Irish struggle against the 'National' Government is a glorious opportunity for pressing home the fight against British capitalism by the double method of supporting Ireland and strengthening the struggle against the capitalist offensive. . . . In Britain the cry must go up from every factory, trade union and labour exchange that the workers recognise Ireland as an independent nation and acclaim its right to separate from the Empire. We must condemn the land annuities as a system of undisguised imperialist tribute and fight against all measures of reprisals that the imperialists are employing. We must call for the withdrawal of all British troops and military representatives and demand that the artificial partition of the country be ended".

At the last Congress of the British Communist Party before the Second World War a special emergency resolution was adopted on Northern Ireland condemning the Special Powers Act as "a complete denial of liberty and democracy" and placing the blame for the repression in Northern Ireland squarely on the shoulders of the British Government. Congress therefore demanded that "all steps necessary be taken in order to remove this Act which was, and is, the basis of rule by the British ruling class in Northern Ireland. The removal of this Act will give to the liberty-loving people of the North greater opportunities to develop that unity between Catholic, Protestant, Nationalist, Socialist, which is vitally necessary in order to carry on a successful struggle for the freedom of the Irish people and greater friendship with our working people in Great Britain".[29]

After World War II

When the second world war was over and we drew up our new programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, we declared, in the very first edition of the programme in 1951:

". . . the enforced partition of Ireland and the maintenance of British troops in Northern Ireland must be ended, to enable Irish national unity to be realised".

In the second revised edition, in 1968, the same principles were carried forward:

"The enforced partition of Ireland should be ended and British troops withdrawn from Northern Ireland, leaving the Irish people free to realise their united republic".

When the new crisis arose in Northern Ireland in 1969, our Party immediately made its position clear and sought an early consultation with the Irish Communist Party in order to discuss how best to mobilise our peoples in support of the demands of the progressive movement in Northern Ireland.

1969-70 Consultations

Both our Parties faced a major problem and that was to formulate proposals which, without in any way abandoning our basic positions and principles in support of the Irish people's right to reunite their country, would meet the demands of the immediate situation, make possible an advance for the democratic movement in Northern Ireland and so open the way to new possibilities for a solution to Ireland's basic long-term problem—full unity and full independence.

In our discussions we came to the conclusion that the centre of the present struggle in Northern Ireland was that for democratic rights, and an end to repression and discrimination, and that a victory in this struggle could pave the way for uniting the working class in Northern Ireland. In this way new conditions would be created for achieving a political solution to the partition of Ireland so that British domination of Northern Ireland could be ended and the Irish people given the opportunity of reuniting their country. We also were aware of the fact that this struggle for democratic change in Northern Ireland was not the concern of the Irish people alone, but must be the concern and responsibility of the British working people, too, since it was British imperialism which was the main factor making the continuation of repression in Northern Ireland possible. The decisive role of British imperialism has since been made more clear with the introduction of direct rule from Westminster and in the new White Paper proposals which actually strengthen the grip of the British ruling class over the affairs of Northern Ireland.

Between 1969 and 1973 the British and Irish Communist Parties have met on a number of occasions, sometimes in London and sometimes in Belfast. This close consultation between our two Parties during these recent critical years has strengthened our collaboration with one another, helped us to gain a better understanding of our common tasks and assisted the British Party in particular to obtain a closer knowledge of developments in Northern Ireland.

In its statement of August 14th, 1969, issued immediately after the pogrom in Belfast when thousands were rendered homeless and hundreds suffered physical attack from which a number died, the Political Committee of the British Communist Party declared:

[29] Communist Party of Great Britain, 15th National Congress, Birmingham, September 16-19, 1938.

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> "Any basic constitutional changes are questions of a longer-term nature which can only be settled by consulting with the people of Ireland. The immediate question is that of civil rights and democratic liberties. Unless these are introduced quickly, the situation can only worsen and a solution be made more difficult".

We therefore called for the most speedy passing of a Bill of Rights by the British Parliament to end repression, introduce electoral reform on the basis of one man, one vote, and to do away with all discrimination.

The Joint Statement issued five days later by the Communist Party of Northern Ireland, the Irish Workers' Party[30] and the Communist Party of Great Britain expressed the same basic demands and emphasised that the responsibility for introducing the necessary democratic reforms "rests upon the British Government, which has already committed British armed forces and has the power to legislate whatever changes are required".

A year later our two Parties met again, this time in Belfast. The joint statement issued then, 30th July, 1970, placed special emphasis on working class unity in Nothern Ireland and unity between Irish and British workers as the key to defeating the reactionary Unionist Government in Northern Ireland, introducing the necessary democratic reforms and waging an effective fight for jobs, homes and education.

The statement concluded :

> "The Communist Parties of Ireland and Britain, meeting in Belfast, hold that the interests of our two peoples are linked together, and that our bonds of friendship and solidarity must be further strengthened in future joint actions. We call on the working people of our two countries to continue the struggle for full democratic rights in Northern Ireland, and for the Irish people's right to self-determination".

A statement issued by the Executive Committee of the British Communist Party on 14th March, 1971, after drawing attention to the steadily deteriorating situation in Northern Ireland, pointed out that "The crisis exists in Northern Ireland because for fifty years successive British Governments have pursued a course of supporting the reactionary Unionist control of the Six Counties in order to prevent the reunification of Ireland. . . What is needed to solve the crisis is not British troops but political measures". The statement therefore called for "an end to the use of British troops to carry out the reactionary policies of Whitehall and Stormont". It reiterated the demand for a Bill of Rights and for urgent measures to tackle the mass unemployment and the housing crisis, so that a situation could be created in which political talks could take place between the Government of the Irish Republic and representatives of the people of Northern Ireland "so that outstanding constitutional problems could be tackled and the divisions overcome".

Joint Statement of April 1971

On 13th April 1971, representatives of the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Communist Party of Ireland met in London for further talks on the situation in Northern Ireland. The joint statement issued on 14th April reaffirmed our basic joint position and warned that "Any recourse to Direct Rule by Westminster would . . . be . . .a further violation of the sovereign rights of the Irish people. It would meet with widespread hostility in Northern Ireland and from the people in the Irish Republic, and would only delay the introduction of democratic changes necessary for further progress".

Twelve months of direct rule under the one-man control of Whitelaw has confirmed that analysis. Although compelled by mass pressure to make some concessions, the British Government's new measures retain the essence of the former repressive system. The Special Powers Act has gone, but the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, based on the Diplock Commission proposals, retains all the worst features of the Special Powers Act, including the right of detention, and introduces a number of even more retrograde steps. The only basic difference in the new proposals is that the machinery of repression will be firmly in the hands of the British Government instead of in the hands of Stormont as it largely was previously.

The joint statement of our two Parties, issued on 14th April, 1971, also set forth a seven point programme of demands which, if implemented, could bring democracy to the people of Northern Ireland and an end to the repression, discrimination and terror. The seven points included the demand for a Bill of Rights; finance for a comprehensive programme of industrial and housing development; an end to the use of British troops as a police force, and the confinement of their duties "to those of protecting citizens from sectarian violence when no other means is available"; the immediate release of all political prisoners; and discussions with the Government of the Irish Republic on "how to bring about reunification of the country on the basis of full self-determination for the people of Ireland".

[30] The two parties in Ireland merged to form a single united Communist Party of Ireland in March 1970.

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The seventh point urged that on the basis of this programme "the role of British troops in Northern Ireland should be progressively reduced, and finally they should be withdrawn altogether".

The joint statement concluded by declaring:

> "The better Ireland which her people desire can only be won by the Irish people themselves. The task of her friends is to fight to give them the freedom to win it. The programme outlined above is designed to create the necessary conditions for this process".

The statement therefore urged "the British working class, the Irish workers in Britain, the working class in Ireland, both Catholic and Protestant, and all who wish to see a just conclusion to the conflict of centuries to support and work for the realisation of these democratic demands".

During this whole period our Party has acted to win support for the policies outlined in the above statement, especially in the British Labour movement. We have had to fight against the bi-partisan policy on Ireland followed by the right-wing Labour Party leadership, and at the same time arouse the British Labour movement to an understanding of the real nature of the problem of Northern Ireland, and the urgent need for British working class, in its own interest, to campaign for a change in British Government policy.

Solidarity Developed

As it was put in the resolution adopted at our 32nd National Congress, November 1971:

> "Reaction in Northern Ireland strengthens reaction in Britain. . . . A victory for democracy in Northern Ireland would be a victory for the British working people as well as for the people of Northern Ireland".
>
> "It is therefore in its own direct interests that the British trade union labour movement should intensify its campaign for a fundamental change in British Government policy towards Northern Ireland".

The campaign to achieve this understanding has not been easy, but some advance has been registered. This was seen, for example, in the stand taken by 68 Labour MP's in October 1971 against internment at the time of the emergency debate at Westminster. It was seen in the opposition to British Government policy expressed by the position adopted by the National Union of Students at its 1972 conference. Above all, it was expressed in the resolution for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, which was adopted unanimously at the September 1971 British Trades Union Congress.

The demands for which we have fought, and at the core of which lies the demand for a Bill of Rights, are still to be fulfilled. The new proposals of the British Government, outlined in its March 1973 White Paper, mark a new phase in the campaign and, to a degree, reflect the impact of the movement for change; but the basic demands for which we have campaigned still remain, both those relating to the more immediate stage of ending repression in Northern Ireland and establishing the necessary democratic liberties as well as the longer-term and fundamental question of the reunification of Ireland.

Aims of the Monopolies

In their desire to use their position in the European Common Market for maximising their profits, the big British monopolies have used the crisis in Northern Ireland to strengthen their own direct grip on the territory and, at the same time, are hoping to use the new situation to strengthen their influence on the Irish Republic as well. British imperialism's policy towards Ireland is the other side of their attacks against the democratic rights and living standards of the British working people. Both aspects of policy are directed towards strengthening the positions of the British monopolies *vis à vis* the workers of our two islands, and in competition with other foreign monopolies.

A joint statement issued by the representatives of the Irish and British Communist Parties, after a meeting in Belfast on April 24th-25th, 1972, condemned "the Westminster imposition of direct rule on the Six Counties of Northern Ireland" and called urgently "for the strengthening of the unity of the working classes of our two islands in order to defeat the aims of the Tories. Both our peoples are faced with the effects of reactionary Tory policies on jobs, living standards, democratic rights and membership of the Common Market. The violent situation in Northern Ireland is a result, in part, of the whole Tory Government's repressive policies. To defeat these there must be an end to the bi-partisan support given by the British Labour leaders to the Tory Government's policy towards Ireland".

A further joint statement of the two Parties, issued in Belfast in December 1972 warned the British Labour movement that "the increasing repression in Northern Ireland is paving the way for strengthening authoritarian trends in Britain and introducing new reactionary legislation and special powers".

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Explanation and Action

There is still a great task to be done to ensure that the changes needed in Northern Ireland are carried out. The British TUC policy for a Bill of Rights was a correct decision—but it still remains a declaration of principle; it is not yet being fought for by the British trade unions whose representatives endorsed it so unanimously. In the four and a half years since the crisis deepened dramatically in Northern Ireland it has required a great deal of explanatory work by our Party and other progressive organisations and individuals to spread an understanding in the Labour Movement as to the nature of the problem and the policies required to find a solution. In a sense we have been in a period similar to that which confronted Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1914, when the imperialist war broke out, temporarily blinding the working people as to where their real interests lay. Lenin said then that what the movement had to do was "Explain, explain and explain again".

This has been, and still is, a major part of the tasks confronting the British Communist Party on the Irish question. Some advance has been made. There is a better understanding now as to the real issues involved, and more acceptance of the policy for which we have been campaigning. People are finding ways to respond to the situation, as indicated by the representative delegation of British citizens who went to Derry in January, 1973, on the anniversary of the Derry massacre to express their solidarity with those campaigning for democratic rights in Northern Ireland.

Representative sponsorship was won for the Conference on Peace and Freedom on Northern Ireland, held in London in April this year, and with a preparatory Committee, including the National Council for Civil Liberties, the Political Committee of the London Co-operative Society, the Haldane Society, the National Union of Students, the Communist Party, the Connolly Association, the National Assembly of Women, Liberation (formerly the Movement for Colonial Freedom), and the British Peace Committee. The participation of these nine organisations in preparing this conference reflects the growing concern of British people over the continuation of the crisis in Northern Ireland.

United Action the Key

With the holding of elections for the new assembly in Northern Ireland in June this year a further phase in the struggle for democratic liberties will have been opened. However, the main immediate demands for the introduction of a Bill of Rights and an end to all repressive legislation and actions still remain to be fulfilled; and to secure their fulfilment the united action of the British and Irish working class still remains the key. By our united efforts to win these demands we can create a new political situation in Northern Ireland and so open up the possibilities of the Irish people, as a whole, finding a satisfactory path to reunification and full independence. Such a historic achievement will be a powerful blow against British reaction and thus help the British working people in their struggle to end capitalism and establish a socialist Britain.

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Discussion Contributions on:

Marxism and Dialectical Method

Richard Gunn

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Most communists will agree on the importance of dialectics for a clear grasp of Marxist theory. However, there may be less agreement on the reasons why it is important and on the precise nature of dialectics itself. The present article is intended to outline an approach to the question: what is dialectics? I shall be satisfied if what I say stimulates discussion in this most basic area of Marxist theory.

Maurice Cornforth, discussing dialectics in *Marxism Today* some time ago,[1] concentrated on a specific question in this area: the question of dialectical "laws". My purpose differs from his in that I want to stress some of the broader implications of the subject, such as its significance for our understanding of *what it means to be a Marxist*. I shall therefore use a larger canvas, and start by sketching in the historical origins of our problem.

Historical Background

In the most general terms, I would argue that dialectics appeared on the modern philosophical scene when the rationalistic Enlightenment philosophy of the eighteenth century was faced with new problems posed by the successes and failures of the French Revolution. It was then no longer possible to maintain that society—once a few obstacles had been swept away—presented a clean sheet for the realisation of projects conceived by abstract reason. Social aspirations and projects had to be seen as themselves arising from a complex social and historical dynamic. Because the more superficial Enlightenment attitudes had in this way been shown up as inadequate, it was tempting for some writers to fall back on irrationalism: the elevation of sentiment over reason. It was as a defence of Enlightenment values against irrationalism that Hegel, the greatest of all rationalist and idealist philosophers, developed his dialectical methodology.[2]

In Hegel's hands, dialectics is at once progressive and reactionary, critical and apologist.[3] Reason (represented in politics by the State and in the realm of thought by philosophy) is seen both as embodied in, and as a challenge to, existing institutions. Despite some of Engels' more tempting comments,[4] it simply is not possible to separate out a dialectical, critical and progressive from an idealist, system-building and conservative Hegel. The picture is much more complicated—and fascinating.

Marx felt this fascination when in 1837, at the age of 19, he became converted to Hegelianism.[5] During the next decade, he underwent a complex philosophical development: in general terms, what we see is a constant pressure, an insatiable impulse to go further and further along a road once started. In order to be faithful to the radical tendencies in Hegel, Marx (influenced by Feuerbach) realised that it was necessary to go beyond Hegel himself.[6] In order to be a consistent democrat, it was necessary to go beyond radical democracy[7] and finally to

[1] Maurice Cornforth, "Some Questions About Laws of Dialectics", *Marxism Today*, November 1965.

[2] Georg Lukacs, who of all Marxists is perhaps most aware of the "Enlightenment" nature of dialectics, writes: "Irrationalism is the form taken by a thought which flees before a dialectical response to a dialectical question." ("Max Weber and German Sociology" in *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 4, November 1972)

[3] For a useful account of Hegel's development see the early chapters of Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*.

[4] E.g., in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*.

[5] See Marx's 1837 letter to his father, in D. McLellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: Early Texts*. In various works, notably his *Marx before Marxism*, McLellan gives an excellent account of Marx's early development.

[6] In his 1843 *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, and again in the 1844 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*.

[7] 1843 *Critique*.

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accept communism.[8] In order to be a consistent philosopher, it was necessary to go beyond philosophy first to politics[9] and then to political economy.[10] In order to be consistent with Feuerbach's best insights, it was necessary to go beyond Feuerbach himself[11] to the brilliantly original historical materialism of *The German Ideology* and *The Communist Manifesto*.

This headlong development, which covers in ten years as many philosophical positions as normally occupy a century, has an overall consistency binding start and finish together[12] in such a way that Marx, who went beyond Hegel, remained a Hegelian; Marx, who went beyond philosophy, remained a philosopher . . . and the list could be extended to cover all the positions mentioned in the previous paragraph. What in fact we have is a drawing together of all the strands of European culture which embodied the Enlightenment attitudes mentioned above. Marxism stands firmly in the tradition of Enlightenment rationalism and humanism[13] and is a statement of that tradition more rigorous, more realistic and more resourceful than any before—or since.

The Nature of Dialectics

Taking this general historical account as background, we can now focus more closely on our specific problem: the nature of dialectics.

My suggestion is that Marxist dialectics is *the cutting edge of Enlightenment values in the present historical period*. I would stress that by thus "situating" Marxist dialectics historically and relating it to a particular tradition, I do not mean to belittle either its originality or its importance. On the contrary, one of the great philosophical merits of Marxist dialectics is this: it allows the positions of Enlightenment humanism to be stated without the metaphysical idealism which characterised their eighteenth century expression.[14] What we must now examine is just how dialectical method can achieve this result.

It will be noted that I have referred to "dialectical method" or to "dialectics" rather than to abstractions such as "Dialectic" or "the Dialectic". This is deliberate. The essence of what I want to say depends on taking very seriously Engels' contrast between "dialectical" and "metaphysical" modes of thought.[15] If dialectics is seen not as methodology but as some kind of abstract entity or agent, then it becomes itself an undialectical "metaphysic".

It is worth dwelling on this point. Metaphysics, I suggest, is less a definite philosophical position than—like dialectics itself—a certain *style* of thinking. It is a style which prepares the ground for the adoption of the philosophical *position* we call idealism. The "professional" metaphysician considers highly abstract, rigid and frequently tautologous arguments dealing typically with subjects such as "the nature of reality" or "the nature of mind". He occupies a charmed world in which the barest and emptiest of propositions will seem the most clear, the most obvious—and the most important. He becomes the slave of his own abstractions, abstractions which have lost all connection with the real world and with social practice. He is in fact the arch-dogmatist, so trapped in his categories of thought as to be unable to seen any viewpoint other than his own. He has forgotten what we may call (loosely) the "human nature" of all concepts: the way in which they are rooted in human life and action, in the production and reproduction of specific social formations.[16]

We can sum this up by saying that the metaphysician thinks in a *reified* manner. His thinking proceeds "out of phase", so to speak, with the practical life around him. It is easy to see how this style of thought leads on to idealism; reified thought has a spurious appearance of self-sufficiency, and seems temptingly independent of the world in which it exists. Marx wrote: "Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process"[17].

[8] 1844 *Manuscripts*.

[9] Marx takes this typically Young Hegelian step in his notes on his Doctoral Dissertion, 1841 (in *Karl Marx: Early Texts*).

[10] 1844 *Manuscripts*.

[11] *Theses on Feuerbach*, 1845, and Part 1 of *The German Ideology*.

[12] Louis Althusser, in *For Marx* and more recently in "The Conditions of Marx's Scientific Discovery" (*Theoretical Practice*, Nos. 7 & 8, January 1973) has argued that in 1845 there is a radical "break" in Marx's development. Here I can only state my disagreement with this view,and stress again the unity and coherence of Marx's development.

[13] My argument is that Marx was an "Enlightenment" humanist. But besides "Enlightenment" humanism we may also distinguish a "Romantic" humanism whose modern representatives are personalism and Existentialism. "Romantic" humanism stresses not rationality but feeling and subjectivity. It seems to me that many Marxists who wish to argue that Marxism is a humanism weaken their case by attempting to place it in the "Romantic" rather than the "Enlightenment" tradition. One of the valuable features of Althusser's work is to have demonstrated the untenability of the "Romantic" (but *only* of the "Romantic") position.

[14] i.e., up to and *in some respects* including Hegel.

[15] e.g., in *Anti-Duhring*, Progress Publishers, pp. 31-34. The contrast is also to be found in Hegel.

[16] Ludwig Wittgenstein, not himself a Marxist, has this point in mind when he writes: "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life." (*Philosophical Investigations*, Para. 19)

[17] *The German Ideology*, Lawrence and Wishart, p. 37.

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This is precisely what the metaphysician's style of thinking—itself rooted in a specific social formation—induces him to forget. Metaphysics is perhaps the clearest instance of "false consciousness".

Let us be clear: materialism itself can be given a "metaphysical" expression. Such is the "mechanical materialism" rejected by Marx in the *Theses on Feuerbach*. And such metaphysical and mechanical materialism is only a step from idealism—if it is not idealism already. Not even dialectics is out of danger: it too may be (and has been) expressed in metaphysical and undialectical terms.

We come now directly to our key question: the nature of dialectics. Dialectics, I suggest, is *the art of thinking in a non-dogmatic, non-reified, non-metaphysical manner*. To think dialectically is *to employ concepts in the constant awareness of their "human nature", their intrinsically social origin and application*. Dialectics is not—as its critics maintain—a rigid straitjacket, a dogmatic abstract framework into which the world must be forced. Rather, it is synonymous with flexibility and rationality, with a readiness to approach different problems in different ways. To argue dialectically is not to defend any closed metaphysic: it is to enter into ones opponent's argument and prise it apart from within, in its own terms.[18] It is the attitude of the open, not of the closed mind which is dialectical. This is what I meant when I said earlier that dialectics is the cutting edge of Enlightenment humanism and rationalism in the present period. I suggest that it is also a good part of what Marx meant when he declared that dialectics "is in its essence critical and revolutionary"[19]. Dialectical criticism is permanently subversive of all reified, dogmatic systems of thought.

Dialectical Method

It may be asked how it is that taking account of the social and human nature of concepts helps us to avoid dogmatism. The point is that once we are aware of the social basis of a concept or system of concepts, we can—if we so desire—escape its semantic clutches the more easily. It loses that highly misleading appearance of obviousness or "common sense" which so often attaches to a way of thinking not yet subject to a dialectical critique. We can realise that a given way of thinking is not fixed and *eternal*, that it is the result of no divine decree but, rather, represents one human and social project among others. A great and classic example of this is Marx's critique of the reified categories of bourgeois political economy, so closely bound up with this demonstration that they were rooted in a particular form of society. Another example from Marx is his rejection of moralising language in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* on the basis that "a socialist programme cannot allow such bourgeois phrases to pass over in silence the *conditions* that alone give them meaning."

In general, to work back to the social relations underlying a phenomenon (be it a form of thought or language, or a mode of production) is a necessary precondition of being able to change it. Herein lies part of the great practical importance of dialectical thought.

What about dialectical *method*? In a sense there is no method: nothing that can be learnt once and for all and mechanically "applied" to new situations as they arise. Dialectics, we may say, *solves no problems*. Rather, there is dialectical method only in the sense of a characteristic awareness, a *style* of approach radically different from the reified style we called metaphysical. And there are certain "rules"—e.g., that of the transformation of quantity into quality, and that of the negation of the negation—which if borne in mind make for a dialectical style of thought.[20] These rules are in no way "laws of nature", although nature can only be understood "metaphysically" if they are not taken into account.

This last point raises the whole question of a "dialectics of nature", one of the most controversial areas within Marxist philosophy. It seems to me that if we say: nature *is dialectical*, rather than that the concepts used to understand nature must be handled *dialectically*, we are guilty of turning dialectics itself into a metaphysic. John Lewis puts the point well when he says that dialectics is concerned "not with nature, except . . . that all our *knowledge* of nature . . . is essentially dialectical".[21]

Dialectical Logic

We have attached great importance to the emphasis dialectics places on the human and social nature of thought. I believe these rather general phrases can be "firmed up" by considering what is involved in a *dialectical logic*, although our argument here must become slightly more technical than hitherto.

Writers on dialectics traditionally deal with the subject of "contradictions". Now, in non-dialectical "formal" logic, a contradiction is seen purely as a formal or *syntactic* contradiction. Dialectical logic does not conflict with formal logic, as has sometimes

[18] This is what in Hegelian philosophy is known as "immanent criticism". It is the approach employed by Marx when criticising Hegel and also—a point often missed—when criticising Feuerbach in his 1845 *Theses*. In general, it is the approach used in any dialectical critique.

[19] Afterword to the second German edition of *Capital* Vol. 1, 1873.

[20] "Style" is often thought of as something superficial. However, it involves the whole weight and bearing of an argument and determines the *kind* of results the thinker is going to get.

[21] John Lewis, *The Marxism of Marx*, Lawrence and Wishart, p. 65.

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been maintained,[22] but occupies a different domain. It deals not with syntactic but with *semantic* contradictions: incoherences that can be seen only when a piece of thinking is brought into relation with the life-situation of the thinker, with his social praxis.[23] "Metaphysical" thought may contain no syntactic contradictions but by definition will be flawed with semantic (dialectical) contradictions. Dialectical thought, by contrast, can at least pose to itself the problem of remaining free of semantic contradictions, the problem of ensuring the adequacy of thought to praxis. From its point of view, this problem is at least visible.

Semantics is the study of *meaning*; and dialectical logic (unlike formal logic) does not abstract from the meaning, the content, of propositions and other expressions. Dialectics involves a specific *theory of meaning*, according to which the semantic dimension of concepts and expressions is necessarily a *social* dimension. We can say that concepts and words have meaning, just as commodities have exchange-value, only in and through their *social currency*. What a word "means" is no private, internal affair, no idea "inside my head" which only I can see. Nor is the meaning of a word some eternal Platonic "Form" laid up in heaven and safely isolated from the cut-and-thrust of the practical world beneath. Rather, the meaning of a word is inseparable from its social existence and use in language. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx comments: "It is not the case that ideas are transmuted in language in such a way that their particular nature disappears and their social character exists alongside them in language, as prices exist alongside goods. Ideas do not exist apart from language".[24] As for language itself, he had written earlier: "language *is* practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it exists personally for me as well".[25]

These remarkable passages show that Marx was alert to the *social* nature of meaning, and saw concepts as rooted in society in a precise and definite way. By contrast, those non-social or "private" views of meaning, which we have said that dialectics rejects, are the lynch-pin of all metaphysical, reified thought (including pre-dialectical Enlightenment rationalism). We might add that Marx's "socialisation" of the concept of meaning has a direct parallel in his assertion in the *Theses on Feuerbach* that "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations." The view of meaning is a particular instance of this larger claim.

To be a Marxist

We may now summarise our conclusions. Dialectics is, first of all, a methodology and not a metaphysic. Negatively, we can say that to think dialectically is to think in a non-dogmatic, non-reified, non-metaphysical way. Positively, to think dialectically is to think in a flexible manner which takes into account the social nature of thought and meaning. And the general notion of the social nature of thought can be "firmed up" along the lines of our discussion of semantics given above.

Let us now stand back from what has been said and look at some of the larger implications. In the first place, it follows from our view of the social nature of thought that reified thought, rooted as it is in a specific type of social formation, can be overcome fully only if the social formation itself is itself abolished. "De-reification", the abandonment of dogmatism, can be no inner, purely individual affair. An internal, "spiritual" struggle against reification remains trapped in precisely that false consciousness which "forgets" to take the social nature of thought into account. The struggle against dogmatic thinking is thus at the same time the practical, mass struggle against a given mode of production.

It is important to realise that reified, metaphysical thought is no rare plant but on the contrary is the characteristic style of thought throughout capitalist society. It has its roots deep in the capitalist social formation and, while capitalism exists, is a constant "temptation" for Marxists and non-Marxists alike. It is the natural and in Lenin's sense the "spontaneous" style of thinking in capitalist society. Thus no argument, no set of political convictions, can exclude this style of thinking once and for all; remaining free of it requires a constant effort to maintain critical awareness regarding the categories which capitalism "offers".

In this light, the question of *what it means to be a Marxist* takes on a new dimension. To be a Marxist, it is not enough to have "learnt off" one's political theory like a catechism. Rather, it involves a distinctive, dialectical *kind* of consciousness: a flexible, non-dogmatic approach to—in Lenin's

[22] e.g., by Karl Popper. See his "What Is Dialectic?" in his *Conjectures and Refutations*. Popper does not distinguish dialectical from formal contradictions.

[23] To use Hegelian terms, formal logic deals with rationality "in itself", dialectical logic with rationality "for us". Rationality "for us", the so-called "subjective moment" in logic, is definable in terms of adequacy to social praxis.

[24] D. McLellan (ed.), *Marx's Grundrisse*, Macmillan, p. 71. Wittgenstein, in *Philosophical Investigations*, puts forward an almost identical view when he criticises the idea of a "private language" and urges (Para. 43) that "the meaning of a word is its use in the language."

[25] *The German Ideology*, Lawrence and Wishart, p. 42. Marx goes on to argue that "Consciousness is . . . from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all."

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phrase—the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. To be a Marxist is to be constantly alert to the possiblity of *one's own political convictions* hardening into dogmatism.[26] And to think dogmatically in capitalist society is *already* to have launched oneself in the direction of unconsciously accepting the reified myth of capitalism's stability and eternity.

In the Enlightenment Tradition

In conclusion, let us glance back once more at the history of our problem. Dialectics, we said, arose from the need to restate the Enlightenment tradition in a way adequate to the situation following the French Revolution. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the Enlightenment tradition is its emphasis on rational thought and on the relation between the latter and social progress. In the new situation, however, it was no longer plausible to speak of rational projects being imposed on society as it were "from outside". Dialectics, with its stress on the way in which all projects and thought itself are rooted in society, became the vanguard representative of the Enlightenment tradition. With dialectics, it became possible to follow the Enlightenment thinkers in emphasising the importance of reason and of non-dogmatic rational discussion, but to do so in a way which avoided their rigid and metaphysical cast of thought. To stress the value of a rational praxis and a rational form of society was no longer to lapse into empty utopianism on the one hand or totalitarian rigidity on the other. Rationality no longer excluded flexibility and richness.[27] As the dilemma of form and content was resolved (*vide* our remarks on dialectical logic), reason no longer appeared as a pure and ethereal absolute and was seen to have currency only in human and social terms.

We have referred to the headlong rush of Marx's early philosophical development: in those ten years the Enlightenment tradition received a greater deepening and enrichment than in the previous hundred years of its history. The very readiness with which Marx moved *beyond* positions once taken up testifies to his non-dogmatic, dialectical approach. As Marxists, we can be clear that the claim of liberal democracy—tied as the latter is to the reified categories of capitalism—to be the heir of the Enlightenment, has extremely dubious validity. We can advance the thesis: *Marxism is the cutting edge of Enlightenment attitudes in the present period*, a period in which reified thought and irrationalism (its negative counterpart) flourish in the soil of capitalist society.[28] And we can say, too: dialectics is the philosophical cutting edge of Marxism.

[26] Lukacs, discussing the problem of political organisation in *History and Class Consciousness* (Merlin, p. 333) makes the point that "dogmatic rigidity" is "a constant threat to every theory adopted by men with a reified consciousness who have grown up under capitalism."

[27] Henri Lefebvre perceptively refers to a "conflict between rigour and fruitfulness" in pre-dialectical rationalist thought (*Dialectical Materialism*, Cape, p. 24). It is worth noting that many of the most "esoteric" categories of Hegel's dialectics—e.g., that of *Aufhebung*, which can be translated as "transcendence", "suppression", "preserving", "overcoming" or "superseding"—may be seen as attempts to render flexible and semantically coherent the terminology of earlier rationalist metaphysics.

[28] Quite recently, bourgeois philosophy has taken steps to abandon its metaphysical cast. The pioneer in this development is Wittgenstein, and works such as Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* should also be mentioned. The question is whether Wittgenstein's initiative can be sustained or whether, as seems more likely, academic orthodoxy will re-assert itself and pass on only a "bowdlerised" account of Wittgenstein to future students.

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The Althusser Debate

Gordon Gray

There is a point in the first part of Althusser's reply to John Lewis which concerns the theory of knowledge and seems to be a clear example of two people talking across one another. On p. 317 we read:

"3 Thesis No. 3

John Lewis: Man only knows what he himself does.

Marxism-Leninism (Althusser version): *One can only know what exists.*

"A big difference! For John Lewis man only knows what he himself 'does'. For dialectical materialism, the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, one can only know what *exists*, but also that what exists is both '*material*'—that is, distinct from the 'mental' character of the thought by which it is known—and *objective*—that is, exists independently of the subjectivity which knows it." (*Marxism Today*, October 1972)

Lest I be accused of taking Althusser out of context, let me add that I have read and digested what follows, in which he goes on to say:

"That of course does not mean that Marxist philosophy denies the activity of thought, that it denies practical scientific work, the work of experiment in the natural sciences or the work of historical experiment represented by political work (for Marxists the proletarian class struggle)."

Before going into the meat of Althusser's development let me note first of all there is absolutely no logical contradiction between the two statements he italicised at the beginning—one (or Man, it makes not the slightest difference in the context) can know only what exists *and* one can know it *only through what one does*. Here is the synthesis Althusser has missed, falling into the trap of mechanistic materialism thereby.

Thought and Matter

But in this respect Althusser is only the most recent in a long line of Marxists who have fallen into the same trap. In fact it is time we had a very serious look at the dogma which holds thought to be *subordinate* to matter. Perhaps Marx put things this way, perhaps he did not. Be that as it may it is not a correct statement. Let us attend first to the job of getting it correctly put, then, *if need be*, doing what Lenin prescribed in the preface to the first edition of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*:

> "When orthodox Marxists had occasion to pronounce against some antiquated views of Marx (for instance, Mehring when he opposed certain historical propositions), it was always done with such precision and thoroughness that no one has ever found anything ambiguous in such literary utterances."

The point for us is this; if nothing exists but material processes, then thought itself is a material process, for only a fool would deny its existence, hence it cannot be *subordinate* to matter except in the sense that the part is subordinate to the whole. To subordinate thought to matter (except in the sense I have indicated), is to *separate it from* matter, which is precisely the error of the idealists, save that they reversed the order, placing thought above matter.

In saying that thought is a material process I am not referring to just the electro-chemical processes occurring in the brain, the objectively measurable trains of nerve impulses which always go with our subjective experience of thought, but to the *whole* process, *objective and subjective*. If it is a material process, then the whole of it must be, not just the objective part. What is subjective is material too, otherwise we are thrust back into the arms of the siamese twins; idealism and mechanistic materialism.

Even at the lowest level perception is an active process, not a passive one. If, for example, we force the eye to be completely passive, unable to move relative to the image formed in it, then we fail to form complete images but perceive only fragments which move about, fade and are replaced by others. To observe accurately we must actively participate in a process of image building or perception. Moreover, the nature of this image is determined in part by the exact nature of our personal activity in this building process. At the lowest level, as in the formation of primary visual images, this activity is something of which we are usually quite unaware, an unconscious activity, but in the higher orders we become aware of it in some degree. This essential active participation in the process of cognition is the element of truth in John Lewis' thesis. Althusser has not saved his own position by acknowledging the *conscious* activity in scientific experiments and class struggle since this is only the highest level of a much more general activity, most of which is unconscious.

The observer who understands the inevitability of active entry into the observed process makes a better observer than the one who does not because

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he is then free to guide himself into the best vantage points while making due conscious allowance for the consequences of his activity. Nowhere is this clearer than in the process of revolution, for to understand the revolution one must enter into it emotionally while remaining in full control of one's intellectual perceptions, "being able to move in the stream with one's eyes above it".

Objective and Subjective

What then are we to make of the last part of Althusser's statement—"*objective*—that it exists independently of the subjectivity which knows it"? Here is the basic dogma in another form, that the objective can exist *independently* of the subjective, or vice versa, the subjective independently of the objective. In fact they are an indissoluble unity. The basic mistake is in failing to see that the subjective can have meaning only as the "interiority" of a point which may be anywhere. It would be a digression to discuss the mathematical concept involved here, which comes under the heading of topology. Nevertheless the meaning can be made clear with a few illustrations.

I touch my right index finger to the palm of my left hand. I "feel" the finger in my left hand so the feeling is the subjective aspect of an event that is objective to my vision, and if I can hear the rasping of nail upon skin, also objective to my hearing. The same event at the same point is experienced both subjectively and objectively by the same person at the same time. I can go around my body in a similar way, experiencing events that are at once both subjective and objective. It is meaningless to object that the "consciousness" is in the brain and its location in the periphery only an illusion, since we need only ask where "it" is located in the brain to show the idiocy of the objection. Descartes was the last thinker who seriously made such a proposition.

If we ask what is the function of consciousness in the evolution of the species it at once begins to make sense that a particular point of consciousness can have meaning only in relation to a particular objective point/event, that it is meaningless to say that consciousness is *seated* in one place and experienced in another. It is not the subjective and objective which are independent of one another, but the points and events experienced which are thus independent. Moreover, this independence is only relative, not absolute, even between persons. For even without postulating telepathy (which incidentally is not a concept conflicting with materialism) it is possible to enter into the feelings of another, to *empathise* with them to a very high degree, thus extending one's subjective experience outside one's own body. In this empathy lies the basis of social consciousness, of *class* consciousness.

I hold no brief for Lewis' omissions to which Althusser has rightly drawn attention, nevertheless his own error is the more dangerous because, as Stalin once observed in another context, "it is the one we do not see". It is one moreover which perpetuates dogmatism by giving it the sanctity of an ill-considered polemic.

Marxism and the Family

Donald Cameron

(The author is a teacher at the Edinburgh University Medical School)

The family, in capitalist society, is the instrument by which workers are reproduced. Like machines, workers become worn out, they become disabled and die, or their skills become obsolete, and like worn out machines they must be replaced. The meaning of reproduce we want therefore is not quite its biological one. We want it to mean the reproduction of the whole adult, the trained worker, and to imply, conception, birth, nourishment, clothing, housing, upbringing, education and training, at each stage, of infancy, of childhood and of adolescence and only finishing when the mature worker enters the labour market.

Without this use of the family capitalism could not last more than one generation. Through the family, working people are exploited over and above their contribution to profits, taxes, rents, interest etc. The cash paid by the family for the upbringing of their own children is a subsidy to capitalism. It is an important part of surplus value. In the case of a

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family consisting of a man who is working and a woman who is for the time being not working and two children, the man is making a considerable financial contribution to the subsistence of his wife and two children well over the expenditure he would make if he were single. The woman, especially when the family are younger, would usually have work of considerable responsibility in minding the children, seeing to their health and cleanliness, shopping for the family, cooking, laundering the clothes, cleaning the house, getting the children ready for school and her husband for work, buying and repairing clothes. For all this labour she is paid nothing. Who benefits?—the capitalist class. She may have additional labour in caring for one or two old people—out-worn workers, whom capitalism treats worse than its superannuated pit-ponies or race-horses. She does not get paid for this work either.

In Capitalist Society

There have been reproductive arrangements and institutions in all pre-capitalist economic periods. Some of them have been given the name family, for example the reproductive group in the Roman ruling class. None of these have had the same form or function as the family in capitalist society. In capitalist society the form has been very closely prescribed by law making a man responsible for the alimentation of his wife and children even when separated or divorced. Unmarried parenthood is stigmatised by calling the child illegitimate and making both parents financially responsible. Extra-marital sexual activity has been made difficult in many capitalist states by civil and criminal laws preventing homosexuality, adultery and even fornication and bestiality.

Other parts of the superstructure have reinforced the law by encouraging unconscious beliefs, or instincts, to preserve the family. They take the form of love for spouse and children, or more abstractly, concern for the integrity of the family structure. Of particular importance are, religion, literature, painting, social science, and more recently the cinema, press, radio and television. All have combined to create an ideology which protects the family considerably more effectively than the law.

Although it appears from an inspection of the law that all classes and all strata share the same family structure, this is in fact not so. The bourgeois class, and higher paid workers—the better off professional worker—have the financial resources to have more than one family. The wives in these classes often have the training to earn large sums. Divorce and separation are therefore financially much easier than they are among average to poorly paid workers. Among this latter group one partner, usually the wife, must stay at home and look after the children. Untrained, she is unable to earn enough to have them cared for. The husband's small wage must contribute to this family as well as to any additional family commitments he may undertake. In the case of those on supplementary benefit who are separated the benefit is paid to one wife only and the second may be left almost entirely destitute. Women who insist that divorce laws should include provision for substantial alimony are paradoxically increasing the subjection of their sex.

A remnant of slavery in bourgeois society is the father's almost absolute power over his children. This is now expressed as the freedom of parents to make choices for their children. It most often takes the form of a freedom for parents to beat their children, to deny them medical attention, to have them educated separately from other children of their own age or to deny them the friendship and comradeship of certain other children. This freedom may be withdrawn in certain circumstances by local authorities and the courts but this is usually done only in the case of working class parents.

Education is the main area of compulsory and regular state intervention. Children in Britain must be educated in a school approved by the state until the age of 16. The kind of education provided is not of the choosing of the working class but of capitalist society. Religious instruction is compulsory and it and all the other lessons reinforce in the child an ideology which supports the interests of the ruling class. There is considerable medical intervention. There are laws against concealing pregnancy and the birth of a child. Vaccination was for many years compulsory. There are provisions for aid at childbirth and afterwards visits from health visitors. There are compulsory school medical examinations. Since 1948 every woman and child has had a general practitioner service and hospitals are available. Nutritional care was introduced in the Second World War. There were welfare foods for pregnant women and young children, the addition of vitamins to food, free school milk and subsidised school meals. These services are now rapidly being demolished. In 1919 there was the beginning of provision of working class housing at subsidised rents. This service has grown in fits and starts and at present it too is being abolished by stopping council building, raising rents and selling council houses. The public baths and laundry services are also rapidly diminishing.

Children as People

When we come to consider children as people and how they fare in the family we see that their lives are very much affected by the circumstances of the family they happen to have been born into. If the parents are poor they will tend to be under-nourished, poorly clothed and housed and they will have to

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forgo many of the amenities—toys, entertainments, books, holidays—that children born into better-off families can expect. If their parents are ignorant of contraception, or if their particular religious ideology makes it seem sinful, the children can expect an even more impoverished life in overcrowded conditions with little of their parents time and attention. If their parents have a poor level of education they, the children, will not get the best out of the educational system or the health service and if they fall foul of the oppressive state—the police and the courts—they will be less likely to receive the best possible protection and defence.

Children born into a family with only one parent, besides these disadvantages may suffer a stigma especially reserved for them by capitalist ideology. Sometimes children find themselves in families where the parents show a vastly greater than necessary solicitude for them, they cut them off from other children of their own age and often confine them to the companionship of their own sex by making prohibitions about playing, by sending them to special schools and further making them different by pandering to their demand over clothes, material goods, entertainments. At the same time these parents may instil into their children a particular kind of ideology, by ignoring the needs and wants of all other children and showing this as a way of behaviour to their own offspring.

Socialism and Communism

While I agree that one cannot completely foresee the form of the family in Communist society there are many aspects one can foresee and the general direction and form of the class struggle around the family is not difficult to plot out. The opposing armies are already drawn up, and unfortunately the enemies of the working class have recently had the best of most of the preliminary skirmishes, reversing previous working class victories. There is a general need to socialise much of what is now done in the process of reproduction of workers by the individual men and women. We must fight towards the situation where individuals do not have to pay for the reproduction and training of workers for capitalist enterprises. The labour that women expend on shopping and cooking and cleaning and feeding and minding and mending and laundering will have to be done by larger groups of people working together and they will have to be paid for their labours. Many of the devices for achieving these things already exist in embryo through previous working class struggles. They must be won back to their completeness, and extended.

There must be children's allowances for all children at a generous level. There should be special allowances to cover special circumstances. One parent is needed at home for say the first two years. There should be school, clothes allowances and a full and proper living allowance for apprenticeship, college and university.

The decision about welfare foods, school milk and school meals will have to be reversed and vast extensions in municipalising care for children and old people. In achieving these many women will be employed in large groups instead of singly. They will be looking after their own and neighbours children and elderly relatives and of course men will be involved too. All children's playgrounds should be supervised both inside and outside school and a competent corps of traffic wardens recruited to watch out for the very young and the very old in the streets. We need municipal laundries and municipal restaurants, a vastly increased number of home helps with an increased range of duties to include perhaps baby sitting and sitting-in for old people and where necessary seeing children to nurseries and to school.

We must take much more interest, through parent-teacher associations and through increasing numbers of Communist teachers and councillors, in curricula, at nursery schools, schools and universities. We must see that children are taught in a way that benefits the working class as a whole and that anti-working class ideology is eliminated, bourgeois ideology in parenthood and in the family must be rejected, especially the notion that "These are my children, the only ones that I take an interest in, and to hell with all others".

New Relations

This kind of struggle, and the new relations of socialist society, will determine the form of reproductive groups in socialist society. We can say this about it. It will be a much looser arrangement than that in bourgeois society, because it will not be hedged in with laws designed to exploit workers by putting burdens on them that should belong to the whole of society. There will be, for instance, no financial disadvantages or social stigma attached to a motherless or fatherless family. These families may well still be brought about by the emotional incompatibility, death or illness or otherwise of adults. The care of children will be a responsibility of the whole community and governed by a new ideology which creates in us a feeling, or instinct, if you like, that we are all responsible for the welfare and care of all other men, women and children. We will gradually abandon the feeling that we are only responsible for our immediate blood relatives and that the notion that the bond of "blood", of kinship, is more important than friendship or of comradeship in the human race. New relations between parent and child will be possible which are based on friendship created and fostered by shared experiences and not

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enforced by abstract laws which make children the slaves of parents for the benefit of an exploiting class in society.

The relations between men and women will be changed too. The improved medical technologies of contraception will allow a woman to have what children she wants. Her wants will be guided by her own interests, those of her children who are already born, her husband and also of course by what she feels are the needs of society. There will cease to be legal and financial difficulties imposed on men and women in their personal relationships and therefore important sources of friction will be removed.

It is important in working towards the future that we take with us the mass of working class and progressive women and to this end we must examine and analyse the aims and slogans of the "Women's Lib" movement and work towards the elimination of those which are anti-human and anti-working class.

On the Importance of People

Morris Colman

We are told by philosopher Martin Milligan (*Marxism Today*, December 1972) that Marxists from a number of countries will attend the Fifteenth World Congress of Philosophy at Varna in September, and in preparation debated in Bulgaria last spring the question whether and why people are more important than machines. Milligan's paper offers reasons why one must say that people are indeed more important than machines.

Before Marxists present themselves before a world body to discuss such an issue, I think it important that its implications be faced more critically than seems to have been done by Todor Pavlov, author of the theme-paper of the Bulgarian symposium, or by philosopher Milligan himself.

Pavlov is represented as arguing the merits of humans on the grounds of creativity, creative consciousness, and creative personality. Milligan holds that one should go further, and argues that humans occupy a higher level of value than machines because they are capable of feeling, of fully dialectical thinking, of moral development, will, and freedom. Those are weighty attributes, well taken, but one must wonder before what tribunal they are offered on behalf of humanity.

The Only Criterion

Centuries of idealist and largely theological assumptions even today lead many students to the position that to be truly objective one may not show partiality to humanity, but must assume the imagined standpoint of a transcendent observer (God?). That standpoint is strangely like that of some large-scale employer, to whom humans and machines may appear as interchangeable "factors of production."

As a Marxist, I submit that humans are absolutely and uniquely "important" simply because human is what we all are, and that to value humans above machines by any other criterion is to suffer a serious lapse from materialism.

Let us briefly consider the human condition: it should be clear to a Marxist that there are no independent individuals—only individual members of an absolutely interdependent society, who function well or ill depending on the existing relations of production. Everything a human knows he was socially taught; everything he obtains was got through social mediation—it took the socialised contributory labour of countless thousands merely to supply the simple daily needs of any reader of these words—even to enable him to read.

We are compounded of manifold, constant, ineluctable vital needs; through social experience of possibilities those needs generate purposes; those purposes set in motion uncountable varieties of social interaction; the necessary purposes generate all real (i.e. human) values. We are all "important" because we all need each other now and in the future for society to survive and prosper. That knowledge inspires humans to transcend their own immediate needs in behalf of larger social needs.

The conditions of life of the exploiting class do indeed dehumanise its members far more decisively than are any of the exploited. Outside that circumstance I do not see how a Marxist can accept as valid any question regarding the relative "importance" or "value" of human beings compared to any non-human entity, not because of any of the wonderful attributes that do characterise socialised humans, but simply because, young or old, skilled or unskilled, educated or not, they are of us and we are of them; for humans there can be no values higher than those of humanity.

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